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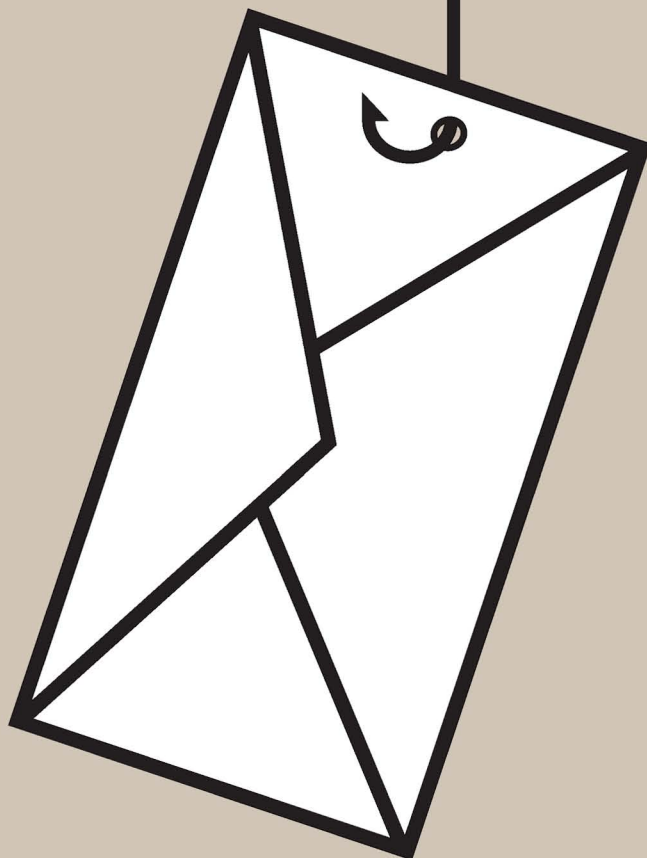
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Sociologizing Corruption Risk

J. Burzyński, T. Burzyński, A. Górny, W. Świątkiewicz



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Sociologizing Corruption Risk

**Organizational, Agential and Cultural
Determinants of Public Sector
Malfeasance**



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Wojciech Świątkiewicz

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Introduction

Global Challenges, Local Resolutions

If contemporary sociological discourses on risk and uncertainty are organized by any structuring principle rendering order to the otherwise nebular nature of the discipline, it is the critical assumption that the terms are indispensable in order to get a more informed perspective on the contemporary, late modern societies (see Beck 1992; Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994; Giddens 1990; Bauman 2007). Social theories of risk often postulate that the multifaceted, utterly obscure nature of late modern social systems and institutions—chief among which are “abstract systems”—is represented by an increase in the number of risks and contingencies faced by individuals and collectivities in the practice of everyday life. In this particular way, dangers have been subsumed within an essentially critical perspective on late modernity which stresses that “uncertainty retains and proliferates everywhere” (Beck 1994, 12). The ubiquity of risk, to put it otherwise, has been conceptualized as a negative consequence of modernization processes, an indispensable cost of assuming a progressive, overly and overtly optimistic perspective on the supposedly emancipatory nature of technological, economic and institutional development.

The problem of corruption affecting the functioning of the Customs Service of Poland may be easily subsumed within the aforementioned line of interpretation. The character, intensity and technological sophistication of contemporary customs operations is determined by the dynamics of late modern social systems whose globalizing tendencies are also reflected by the increase in global crime as manifested by the accelerated circulation of illegal goods and illegitimate immigrants, as well as potential or actual members of terrorist or criminal organizations. Given the scale of challenges associated with globalization, it is little wonder that customs operations in Poland are nowadays furrowed with intense corruption-related risks which, considering the fact that

the Polish eastern border is at the same time the perimeter of the European Union, are not liable to decrease in the foreseeable future.

The specificity of contemporary corruption-related hazards has paved the way for various institutionalized attempts to curb the problem by means of implementing a whole plethora of modernizing incentives and projects. In this particular context, the “Anti-Corruption Action Strategy of the Polish Customs Service 2010–2013+” constitutes an attempt to detect, operationalize, assess, and manage corruption risks as they are typical of the Customs Service operations and its organizational functioning.¹

This monograph is conceptually and methodologically grounded in the survey research concerning corruption risks in the Customs Service that took place in fall 2011 and whose results were subsequently delivered in a form of sociological report in December 2011 (Burzyński et al., 2011). The argument is conceptually divided into seven chapters aiming to delineate a panoramic picture of corruption risks with reference to their organizational, cultural and agential (personal) determinants. Likewise, both the collected data and provided interpretations may be considered as an empirical framework for implementing actions and modernization schemes addressed to structural-organizational and agential dimensions of the workplace environment. In this way, the postulated managerial solutions (the concluding chapter of the monograph) could be perceived in terms of “local,” highly contextualized resolutions to problems and challenges of an inherently global scope.

Needless to say, the monograph may be inscribed within a broader scope of empirical considerations and theoretical reflections associated with the discourse of “risk studies.” Although the discipline can be considered as a novelty in the context of the Polish academia, it represents a well-known and firmly institutionalized response to risk-related issues worldwide.² From the perspective of risk studies, the aim of our research is, first and foremost, to improve the organizational resilience of the Customs Service by means of postulating a set of ready-made solutions and postulates designating the perimeter of good practices associated with corruption risk management.

¹ At this point, one may also refer to the “Action Strategy of the Polish Customs Service for the Years 2010–2015” which postulates, among a number of other ideas, “implementing a comprehensive risk management system for the purposes of control, auditing procedure, facilitations and simplifications” (15). <http://www.mf.gov.pl/en/customs-service/customs-service/strategy>.

² It is worth a reminder that the faculty of risk studies is among the most promising fields of research at the most distinguished universities. This is, for instance, the case of the Centre for Risk Studies established at the Cambridge University. <http://www.risk.jbs.cam.ac.uk/>.

Chapter One

Corruption Risks Theoretical and Methodological Premises of Sociological Research

1. Corruption. A Sociological Perspective

Methodologically speaking, sociological studies aim at a contextual interpretation and understanding of individual and collective actions from a perspective of such trans-personal phenomena as social structures and systems, values, norms, and symbols of culture. Although psychological dispositions and motivations may be regarded as crucial factors when it comes to investigating into the idiosyncratic nature of social realities, social actions are anchored not only in individualized dispositions or purely rational incentives aiming to maximize one's subjectively expected utilities. Therefore, it means that social actions are always inscribed in a framework of pre-established, objectified social facts whose structural character—very often expressed as rules and resources possessed (see Giddens 1984; Sztompka 1991)—is manifested by (and inscribed into) individual or collective agency. In this specific way, personal choices or motivations are permanently anchored in a spectrum of possessed resources (wealth, prestige, power or knowledge) and behavioral rules typical of social groups and groupings in which an individual takes part.

The same can be applied to the problem of corruption whose broader, typically sociological context refers to the structural and cultural transformations that have characterized Polish society since 1989 (cf. Rose-Ackerman 2001, 179–214). As Maria Jarosz puts it:

When observed and analyzed, the transformations taking place in Poland after 1989—also known as the “great change syndrome”—authorize us to advance a thesis postulating that the construction of newly emerged democracy was ac-

accompanied by a plethora of negative socio-political habits and economic mechanisms that were transferred to the practice of everyday life from the reality of *ancien régime*. What is more, some of those pathological patterns of behavior were dangerously amplified in the reality of the Third Republic of Poland. (2003; trans. T.B.)

In this historical context, the practice of “appropriating the state” constitutes a pathological mechanism which is inherited straight from the bygone times of the so-called “real socialism.” The mechanism paved the way for a conversion of public goods (political authority, institutional prestige, or power expressed as a capacity to influence the distribution of socially desirable resources) into strictly private utilities (Friske 2005, 275; see also Kamiński, Kamiński 2004, 143).

In this particular way, the phenomenon of corruption becomes automatically subsumed within a more encompassing sociological problem which indicates the development of discrepancies in normatively formulated societal expectations concerning particular social positions that individuals occupy during their lifetimes. This process, in turn, may give rise to an axiological conflict taking place between social roles that an individual fulfills simultaneously in the context of corruption processes affecting the functioning of the Customs Service, the problem is very often referred to as the “conflict of interests” taking place between formalized requirements of occupational roles as well as employees’ personal ambitions and aspirations resulting from social positions occupied in such informal social structures as families or peer groups. Needless to say, when a conflict of interest occurs, corrupt exchanges are automatically becoming a pathological practice of “treating public functions as a kind of personal benefice” (Kamiński, Kamiński 2004, 127).

A slightly different facet of corruption is revealed when one assumes a broader perspective in which the issue is inscribed into changes affecting the axio-normative order. In this particular context, the problem may be portrayed as a type of pathology affecting the structures of (late) modern societies in which institutional complexity and obscurity go hand in hand with the process of an ongoing axiological and normative deregulation that comes in the wake of rapid social changes.³ As Piotr Sztompka comments on the destructive, inherently traumatizing nature of rapid social and economic transformations:

The career of the concept of trauma as applied to society begins with the realization that change itself, irrespective of the domain it touches, the group it affects, and even irrespective of its content, may have adverse effects, bring shocks and wounds to the social and cultural tissue. The focus shifts from the

³ As far as the type of corruption affecting the Customs Service is concerned, one may address the problem in terms of “sociological underpinnings of corruption” (Mosiej 2007).

critique of particular types of change to the disturbing, destructive, shocking effects of the change *per se*. The classical assumption that change is autotelic value is finally lifted; the fetish of change is undermined. It is countered with the hypothesis that people put value on security, predictability, continuity, routines, and rituals of their lifeworld. (2004, 157)

In the case of trauma, corruption becomes a socially practiced and culturally sanctioned (though completely immoral) instrument of coping with vague mechanisms that orchestrate social realities. Concurrently, corruption becomes a handy means of dealing with the “hostile” reality whose rules and regulations are perceived as alien and utterly incomprehensible. In the Polish context, one may refer to a specific “culture of corruption” involving the generalized norm of social agreement with reference to corrupt practices taking place in the public health system, the police, offices of state, and local administration (Kubiak 2001). Furthermore, one is in a position to observe that the convoluted nature of the Polish tax system may serve as a good example of the aforementioned mechanism. The obscure character of official tax delegations leads to the increase in readiness to perform illegal actions (e.g. tax evasion) and, at the same time, results in the decrease in trust vested in state institutions and offices whose authority is perceived as being arbitrary, or lacking moral constraints (Sztompka 2002, 318–319).

One may also observe that corruption can be conceived as a “shortcut road” which assumes a form of deviant behavior undertaken in response to processes of anomie that run rampant in contemporary societies. The ubiquity of corruption practices, to put it otherwise, is manifested by the lack of culturally authorized rules which facilitate goal accomplishment by means of deploying socially acceptable action procedures (Merton 1986). In this particular situation, corrupt practices—to refer to Robert K. Merton’s typology of coping mechanisms oriented at a situation of anomie—could be conceived as a form of “innovative action” which postulates that individuals are willing to accept socially legitimized objectives (i.e. the value of social promotion, wealth, or getting rich) but, at the same time, are unwilling to accept cultural norms orchestrating their realization (e.g. the imperative of having a “decent” job). In this specific case, the problem cannot be seen in terms of an individual conflict of interest. On the contrary, it is a type of cultural dissonance rooted in structural pathologies of axio-normative systems which are no longer conceived as relatively coherent societal totalities. Hence, this typically systemic understanding goes well beyond the plane of specific (context-related) conditionings of corruption (e.g. low pay, conflicts with one’s superior) which facilitate the conversion of public goods into private resources by individuals acting as representatives of public institutions.

The aforementioned examples clearly indicate the complex nature of mechanisms paving the way for acts of corrupt exchanges. This complexity, to cut a long story short, is manifested by a matrix of interrelated factors comprising (1) organizational factors related to the labyrinthine and obscure character of public institutions; (2) cultural considerations gesturing to the existence of informal norms and values that facilitate corruption, role conflicts, and anomie processes; (3) purely agential components which designate individualized willingness to take part in corruption practices. As a consequence, sociological insights into the matter should be focused, first and foremost, upon conceptualizing a holistic methodology which is capable of subsuming the problem within a broader spectrum of socio-cultural considerations that reach well beyond the local context of occupational roles or particular workplaces. Hence, the emergent methodology for researching into corruption affecting the Customs Service of Poland should refer to three types of socio-cultural factors:

- **local factors** of structural and organizational descent whose aim is to contextualize corruption risks within the interpretative framework of considerations and determinants related directly to a given workplace;
- **general social and cultural factors** which conceptualize corruption risks by means of referring to axiological and normative consequences of the ongoing deregulation in the sphere of values and norms characterizing contemporary “late” modern societies (Giddens 1990, 1991);
- **agential factors** indicating that corruption risk may be defined as a derivative of an individual’s personality or temperamental dispositions, as well as other personal tendencies internalized by means of taking part in diverse formal and informal social groups.

Regardless of its nature, corruption always leads to the creation of the “camouflaged reality” which purports to constitute a convincing alternative with respect to the official rules and regulations typical of the systemic nature of the law state. This dichotomy gives rise to a new form of social inequalities and mutual dependencies that complement the already existing patterns of stratification. Paweł Rybicki claims that:

[s]ociety is divided into two groups: those who are entangled within the labyrinthine networks of corruption practices and the Others who remain indifferent to it (either objectively or subjectively) by the virtue of possessed moral convictions. This mutual relationship between the groups constitutes one of the most interesting problems in sociology. This is not only because of the obscurity of the aforementioned division, but also because of new forms of social divisions, barriers which separate the two parties. Corruption is spreading out in diverse and contradictory political regimes, which means that the phenomenon cannot be defined solely in terms of an already existing political system. At this point, another interesting problem arises; namely, which types of social organizations are more prone to corruption: the elitist ones, equipped

with systems of conspicuous privileges or, contrariwise, the ones utilizing more egalitarian tendencies. (1979, 306–307; trans. T.B.)

Notwithstanding the ideological or political interpretations of aforementioned words, the dichotomy between the transparent and hidden social subsystems is symptomatic of corruption in a way that it renders the establishment of informal economic spheres (also known as the “black economy”). This process is especially valid and discernible when it comes to investigating into the specific type of corruption that affects the reality of the Customs Service in Poland. In this particular case, the scope of direct social consequences associated with the corruption mechanisms can be attributed to the increase in the market significance of illegal (or undeclared) goods. Needless to say, such a situation constitutes a serious threat both to the legal order and the national budget.

Concurrently, the phenomenon of “black economy” suggests that any research into corruption that is limited exclusively to public institutions is as untenable as squaring of the circle. The social significance of corrupt mechanisms is represented by their role in the creation of informal, all-encompassing social networks whose scope goes well beyond the functioning of isolated offices or governmental structures. At this point, one may say that corruption is actually a dark side of the “weak social ties” which designate multilateral networks of social bonds and reciprocal obligations:

The macroscopic side of this communication argument is that social systems lacking in weak ties will be fragmented and incoherent. New ideas will spread slowly, scientific endeavors will be handicapped, and subgroups separated by race, ethnicity, geography, or other characteristics will have difficulty reaching a *modus vivendi*. (Granovetter 1983, 1973)

In this particular manner, the development of corruption-related networks of multilateral dependencies can be perceived as a specific, pathological instance of the accumulation of “social capital”⁴ in which the reinforcement of informal interest groups is ultimately accomplished at the expense of public goods.

Corruption—similarly to any other kind of pathological phenomena—may be seen as a distinct type of societal hazard. This, to put it slightly otherwise, means that the probability of corrupt exchanges is amplified or attenuated respectively to fluctuating socio-cultural conditions (e.g. the lack of transparency in management or the deregulation within axio-normative systems). What becomes typical of this understanding is a purely practical assumption postulating that corruption-related risk is a variable which is inherently subjected to the

⁴ The term refers to the societal productivity of interpersonal networks based upon trust expectations and a principle of generalized reciprocity (see Putnam 1993; Fukuyama 1995).

process of management.⁵ This, consequently, fosters a more prescriptive perspective in which the analysis of factors rendering corruption possible is supplemented by the provision of practical solutions aiming to minimize the observed probability of corruption. Yet, the prescriptive methodology of investigating into corruption risks should not be implemented at the expense of disregarding a typically descriptive sociological approach in which corruption is portrayed with reference to the totality of social, cultural and political determinants. A successful methodology should, consequently, yoke the approaches to create a synthetic viewpoint which, at the same time, is flexible enough to tolerate a necessity to re-deploy focal points in sociological analysis.

2. Corruption Risk in the Customs Service

An Attempt to Define the Problem

Due to the specific nature of occupational duties, representatives of customs services all around the world face a very intense degree of risk with reference to all sorts of corruption hazards affecting their employees. In the Polish context, corruption hazards constitute—as CBA (The Central Anti-Corruption Bureau), NIK (The Supreme Audit Office) and Transparency International show—a consequence of conflicts taking place between an employee's subjective perception of individual interest and the objective interest of institutional (state-oriented) character (Materiały Izby Celnej, 2). As far as the Customs Service of Poland is concerned, the aforementioned interest conflicts are typical of all situations in which customs procedures are implemented with reference to individual passengers and corporate bodies. In this way, one may say corruption risk is a variable inherent to the character of customs job.

“Corruption risk” is a variable which particularly facilitates a more informed sociological operationalization of corruption-related problems. The term can be defined as the probability of a corrupt exchange multiplied by the magnitude of its negative consequences. This understanding—to refer to the mainstream theory of risk—is typical of the “parametric risk definitions” which are focused on the quantitative risk assessment by means of measuring the probability of negative events and estimating the magnitude of losses related to them (Renn 1992, 58–61; see also Studenski 2002, 20). In the context of customs operations, parametric risk definitions are especially conducive to the estimation

⁵ Risk management is a widespread managerial practice that aims to mitigate economic costs related to risks encountered in business (Crocford 1991).

of objective risks which may be calculated on the basis of statistical data extrapolated from databases comprising all recorded corruption acts that took place in past years. This methodology simplifies corruption risk management and assessment as implemented to a particular post in the Customs Service.

The quantitative perspective in risk assessment enables to treat corruption risk in terms of a product of two distinct variables:

- the probability of corruption risk which is measured for a particular job post and estimated on the basis of data extrapolated from corruption prevention statistics;
- the magnitude of losses and other social costs associated with particular types corrupt behavior. This may, for instance, refer to financial losses resulting from the lack of proper customs procedures.

It is worth mentioning, however, that direct economic costs are not the only type of negative consequences associated to contemporary forms of corrupt behavior. Customs corruption is also related to a variety of indirect losses referring to the influx of illegal merchandise (e.g. drugs, fire weapons) or individuals (e.g. illegal immigrants) who may possibly threaten legal order in Poland. What can be also subsumed within the spectrum of negative consequences of corruption is the decrease in trust vested in the Customs Service as a consequence of media coverage related to documented instances of corruption.

The parametric risk definition gives rise to objective and reliable survey data but, at the same time, is not free of certain shortcomings. First of all, objective risk assessments are productive when it comes to describing the already existing state of affairs and they do not address psychological, social and cultural determinants giving rise to corruption. Their main aim is, quite simply, to state and evaluate the objective intensity of experienced risk. In other words, if the reasons for the observed magnitude of corruption risks remain unknown, deploying parametric risk assessments is endowed with a very limited use-value.

Secondly, parametric risk assessments do not embody the totality of social perceptions concerning subjectively experienced uncertainties. This is, for instance, manifested by yawning disparities between statistically assessed risk levels and socially perceived dangers (see Slovic 1992, 34–35; Douglas 1994, 11). The tendency suggests that individuals are willing to follow commonsensical constructs of risk and they could be highly motivated to take risks regardless of the actual assessments discouraging them from doing so. These behavioral and cognitive patterns are typical, for instance, of general social acceptance of driving one's car too fast. However, on the other hand, an entirely opposite type of risk acceptance is possible. It takes place when individuals are not willing to face uncertainty even if objective assessments seem to postulate that the uncertainty level is very low (this is indicative of social disagreement with respect to nuclear energy). The hiatus between subjective and objective risks enables us to

assume that behavioral patterns of coping with uncertainty are indeed a product of diverse agential and structural factors and risk itself cannot be cognitively isolated from the dimension of social action (human agency) (Burzyński, Burzyński 2014).

3. The Sociological Methodology of Investigating into Corruption Risk

Sociological theories of risk are based upon an assumption which postulates that commonsensical, social knowledge is a salient determinant as far as the establishment of social representations of risk is concerned. Societal risk representations, in turn, may function as culturally legitimate patterns of dealing with situations of uncertainty and danger (Burzyński 2008, 69–74; Lupton 2006, 24–28). The sociological perspective on risk, to put it otherwise, may be conceived in terms of a specific “social phenomenology of risk” in a way that it is concerned with the problems of cognition and interpretation which are automatically understood as ways of taking part in the social reality, as well as mechanisms of social construction of knowledge that partake in the creation of the *Lebenswelt* of commonsensical knowledge. Moreover, the statement suggests that individual risk perceptions are interpretatively anchored in the social reservoir of routine conceptions or observations that characterize a given social group or community. In this way, a belief holding that petty smuggling does not have serious social ramifications—to provide a provisional example—may lead to the increase in social acceptance of corruption associated with the very activity. Needless to say, the assumption stressing the overtly societal character of risk acceptance and assessment constitutes the *differentia specifica* of sociological theories of risk and lends them relative autonomy from the psychological and psychometric theories whose stress is laid on personality factors conceived as determinants shaping the perception of hazards’ qualitative characteristics (Slovic 1992, 34–37).

The methodology of social and sociological risk studies is focused, first and foremost, on the analysis of social, cultural and political mechanisms that pave the way for the creation and dissemination of societal constructs of subjective risk. Likewise, the problem of objective risk becomes a subject matter of sociological insight as far as it is endowed with a certain dose of social significance which is most often strikingly dissimilar with reference to pure statistical calculations. In the context of researching into the issue of corruption risk, one may discuss the existence of social preconceptions (social representations

of corruption risk and its intensity) concerning the frequency of acts of corruption. The representations may, in turn, be converted into the general readiness to bribe customs officials and, concurrently, the officials' willingness to accept illegal benefits.

From this particular perspective, subjective risk is not only socially constructed; it also constitutes a shared vision of the world which has been sieved through the strainer of cultural symbols, norms and values that hold the dominant position in a given community Renn 1992, 67; Joffe 2003, 58–60; Lupton 2006, 28–29). Risk is, hence, a learned, internalized and culturally sanctioned means of conceptual categorization which can be deployed in order to make sense out of the reality perceived as a collection of identifiable chances and dangers.

What rests at the heart of the sociological perspective on risk is a postulate that suggests the necessity of relating uncertainty to human agency (understood both collectively and individually). In this sense, risk is a correlate of human activity:

Risk is activated by our actions, the choices we make, the decisions we take. We trigger the threats off by acting in certain ways, we make them relevant, threatening for ourselves. There is always a risk of a plane crash, but for me it is actualized, becomes relevant, only the moment I decide to board. [...] Risks are not just there, rather they are taken and faced. In this narrow sense, risk belongs to the discourse of agency, rather than the discourse of fate. Sztompka 1999, 30)

This specific approach is, nevertheless, endowed with serious methodological consequences: sociological research is not focused on risk *per se*, but rather on all actions taking place in a situation of uncertainty, involving risk perception and assessment, selection of dangers, and activities that aim to deal with negative consequences associated to a particular hazardous event. One may, therefore, say that sociological theories of risk are centered upon providing analytical descriptions of uncertainty conceived as a result of undertaken actions or choices. This means that the intentional modification of individual or collective action patterns is a necessary but not sufficient condition of any fully-fledged risk management strategy.

The notion of risk is concerned with purposeful human actions, rational choices made under the circumstances of uncertainty. Yet, at the same time, human existence can be burdened with risk, as it were, from the outside. (Zacher 2000, 357; trans. T.B.)

The aforementioned exposition to external dangers is not automatically tantamount to the experience of uncertainty seen as a result of objectively existing

dangers. Experiencing risk, sociologically speaking, is a matter of facing other people whose actions and motivations are inscribed in the structural logic of social organization involving the existence of differentiated economic interests, values, attitudes, ideologies or mindsets. It means that experiencing risk is always anchored in the networks of social differences, interpersonal distances and interest conflicts which are traditionally subsumed under an umbrella term of social structure. Corruption risk is a neat example showing the mutual relationship between uncertainty experiences and social structure. It is a result of interest conflicts resulting from structural tensions which are internalized and subsequently focused in an individual's social personality conceived as an entity entangled in many contradictory moral and financial imperatives or requirements.

4. Socio-Cultural Determinants of Corruption Risk

From a purely sociological point of view, risk associated with criminal behavior is a result of human actions undertaken against a fixed, pre-established order of social and cultural systems. It means that human actions are always inscribed in a pre-existent order of social structures (patterns of resource distribution, or organizational systems) and cultural conditions comprising the societal circulation of norms, values and symbols. In the social reality those groups of determinants are intertwined. For instance, behavioral norms are relative to a kind of organizational structure an individual takes part in. The same could be said about the relationship between class position and manifested attitudes, values or mindsets. Hence, it is methodologically legitimate to address social structure as a joint product of axio-normative, ideological, interactive and economic aspects.⁶ The relationship between action and social structure suggests that individual choices are not only a matter of personal will or motivation. Our actions tend to mirror pre-existent structural determinants which may function as incentives, or disincentives with respect to particular forms of individual or collective activity.

In the case of socio-cultural determinants of corruption, cultural norms and values seem to occupy the principal role in a whole plethora of sociological variables related to the matter in question. Axiological and normative elements of symbolic culture indicate socially preferred forms of action which are relative to an organizational environment in which an individual partakes. Hence,

⁶ This holistic understanding of social structures is typical of the INIO model devised by Sztompka (1991).

one may refer to norms and values embedded in a family context (such as respect, loyalty, honesty or legality) and internalized by individuals by means of socialization. A different type of axio-normative imperative is typical of informal work teams in which “organizational sub-cultures” may emerge and, eventually, pose a serious threat to the official mission of the Customs Service of Poland. Regardless of their origin, internalized norms and values manifest themselves as employees’ attitudes towards occupational duties and as such may be altered in the course of motivational programs or training sessions.

A distinct type of structural and systemic factors of socio-cultural descent is related to the existence of “structural gaps” manifesting themselves as ineffective or counterproductive management solutions (i.e. unclear patterns of responsibility delegation, the lack of properly maintained supervision). At this point, the impact of informal organizational climate is also a crucial factor to consider. Interpersonal conflicts, informal pressure exerted upon subordinates may, consequently, lead to the development of a hostile workplace environment which is no longer motivational for the employees. This specific type of organizational and structural determinants is manifested as managerial ineffectiveness that calls for a radical re-construction of labor organization or an amelioration of existing management structures.

The third type of factors is connected to the pre-existent inequalities in the social distribution of socially desired resources (e.g. wealth, power, prestige, knowledge) whose impact on an individual social actor is concerned with their role in prescribing a repertoire of chances enabling the realization of one’s personal objectives or needs. From this particular perspective, corruption is treated as a means of by-passing the encountered structural constraints caused by, for instance, low income, or complicated procedures of occupational promotion.

Not only does corruption risk constitute a function of socio-cultural constraints, but it is also related to individual variables associated with personality or related factors. In this case, personal readiness to take risk seems to assume an important explanatory function. Corruption is, after all, highly illegal and immoral, which means that individuals who are ready to take part in the procedure must reveal a great deal of bravery, risk-taking in the face of grim consequences, such as dishonorable discharge or a forthcoming lawsuit.

Taking all the aforementioned determinants into consideration, one may assume a research hypothesis stating that the probability of corrupt exchange is:

- directly proportional to the degree to which an employee is subjectively motivated to take part in a corrupt exchange by means of incentives comprising: (1) one’s awareness of social consent to corruption, (2) one’s complicated economic situation, (3) insufficiently internalized values of honesty or diligence, (4) inability to understand the complexity of legal procedures, (5) burnout and a degree to which one’s occupation is perceived as nonsensical,

- (6) personality factors, such as greed or irresponsibility, (7) risk taking understood as a personality trait;
- directly proportional to structural facilitations (structural and organizational gaps) assuming forms of: (1) complex, ambivalent and incomprehensible legal regulations causing interpretation difficulties (or leaving too much space for risky interpretations), (2) the lack of standardized anti-corruption practices and procedures, (3) complex procedures of responsibility delegation, (4) stressful work environment, (5) interpersonal conflicts taking place between supervisors and subordinates, (6) insufficient supervision, (7) the lack of anti-corruption coaching, (8) the lack of effort vested in the implementation of organizational trust and honesty culture, (9) the hiatus between income levels typical of public sector and free market enterprises.

In order to grasp the matter more analytically, one may treat the aforementioned groups of determinants separately. However, contemporary sociological theories are more synthetic and aim to construct methodologies that attempt to subsume agential and structural determinants within one interpretative horizon. It means that all events that take place in social life are always a fusion of human action and structural constraints or facilitations. The same statement is applicable when it comes to addressing diverse considerations concerning exposure to dangers and risks:

Risk seems to reside in the space situated in-between the dimensions of agency and structure. It is a correlate of reflexively undertaken actions, but its experiencing is always conditioned by a place which an individual occupies in social structure. (Burzyński 2008, 12; trans. T.B.)

The probability of corrupt exchange in the Customs Service of Poland is highest when ill-motivated personnel face organizational gaps in their own workplace environment. Likewise, corruption risk increases when the employees are not in a position to withstand the negative, de-motivational impact of constraints inscribed in the prevailing model of social inequalities. In this way, corruption risk remains a consequence of internal agential factors (employees' personality driven choices and motivations), as well as external circumstances of structural or organizational character.

Chapter Two

Sampling Methodology and the Characteristics of the Surveyed Population

A survey-based methodology, together with a technique of a group administered questionnaire, was deployed in order to fulfill the theoretical assumptions delineated in the previous chapter. The methodology applied is, in the main, concerned with gathering of standardized empirical data due to statistical analyses of answers provided to the questionnaire questions by the selected groups of respondents. The research situation is orchestrated in such a way as to collect a bigger number of respondents in one place and at the same time. This renders effective data gathering possible: the presence of a pollster has a positive impact on the amount of returned questionnaires. Furthermore, it may minimize the amount of technical problems that occur when the respondents provide answers to the questionnaire questions (in this case, any question-related ambiguities are solved almost instantaneously).

The implementation of a broad-scale field research induced the need to sort out a group of respondents that may constitute a source of relevant data to be applied in order to delineate conclusions and other sociological generalizations referring to the whole target population. In other words, sociological researches of this kind are based upon a need to create and deploy a sample. As far as sociological theories and methodologies are concerned, there are a couple of possibilities according to which the process of sampling may be accomplished. The chosen variants of sampling methodology, at the same time, pave the way for a more specific techniques of sampling which render the selection of a statistically intelligible target group of respondents possible.

We have, however, encountered a number of technical, organizational and financial constraints while researching into the structures and systems of the Customs Service of the Republic of Poland. Having taken these limitations into

account, we decided upon the target-based sampling methodology. In this case, the whole process of sampling was performed with respect to several stages.

The first stage of sampling was concerned with the selection of main sampling units—the Customs Chambers. The units were selected according to their territorial localization which is an instrumental determinant of sampling as far as the type of activities performed by a given Customs Chamber is concerned. It was assumed that a sample comprising respondents representing diversified organizational and socio-cultural circumstances was necessary in order to grasp all the research problems as comprehensively as possible. Furthermore, we decided that the aforementioned considerations could be conceived as instrumental variables as far as customs officers' attitudes and opinions are concerned. Additionally, we assumed that organizational and socio-cultural variables were crucial in order to predict individual responses and reactions to the problem of workplace pathologies in general and the issue of corruption in particular.

We decided to select three main Customs Chambers localized respectively in Biała Podlaska, Gdynia and Katowice. The Customs Chamber in Biała Podlaska is an organizational unit situated at the borderline of the European Union. This specific localization is characterized by the heightened intensity of borderline customs operations and borderline traffic which, in this particular case, are caused by the intensified mobility of individuals. The Customs Chamber in Gdynia, in turn, is an organizational unit that faces a considerable intensity of borderline traffic which is related mostly to overseas trading done by institutionalized bodies corporate. The Customs Chamber in Katowice is an internal customs unit which is localized within the territory of European Union. As a consequence, its functioning differs considerably from the two aforementioned chambers and is mostly concerned with operations indifferent to borderline traffic or borderline operations.

The second stage of the sampling procedure was concerned with the selection of smaller, second-order customs units which are directly subordinated to the authorities of the aforementioned Customs Chambers. In this specific case, the main criterion for selection was concerned with the scale (magnitude) of corruption risks. In order to stay focused on the problem of corruption, we assumed that employees from the chosen facilities at risk were in a position to have been specifically targeted by the selected research procedures.

A slightly different approach was adopted in the case of Customs Chamber in Katowice. Here, the research was directed at the employees who had completed anti-corruption courses at customs facilities in Częstochowa and Rybnik. The respondents were selected mainly due to the fact that their workplaces could be defined as having been exposed to risks of considerable intensity.

All in all, the following organizational units were selected to take part in the research:

- Customs Chamber in Gdynia:
 - Customs Chamber in Gdynia (**Departments:** Anti-Crime Dept., Logistics Dept., Business Supervision Dept., Execution Dept., Internal Control and Anti-Corruption Dept.);
 - Customs Office in Gdynia (**Departments:** Customs Duty Dept., Supervision Dept., Calculation Elements Dept., Customs Excise Control and Gambling Control Dept., Fuel and Alcohol Fees and Gambling Dept., Surveillance Dept. 01, Surveillance Dept. 02);
 - Customs Office in Gdańsk (**Departments:** Corporate Bodies Control Dept., Customs Duty Dept., Gambling Control Section, Calculation Element Dept., Fuel and Alcohol Fees and Gambling Dept.);
 - “Opłotki” Customs Department;
 - “Baza kontenerowa” Customs Department;
 - “Nabrzeże Bułgarskie” Customs Department;
 - “Terminal Kontenerowy” Customs Department;
 - “Basen IV” Customs Department.
- Customs Chamber in Biała Podlaska:
 - Customs Chamber in Biała Podlaska (**Departments:** Excise and Gambling Dept., Surveillance Dept., Human Resources Dept., Counter-Crime Dept., Customs Duty Dept., Calculation Elements Dept., Logistics Dept., Execution Dept., Goods Liquidation Dept.; **Offices:** Business Supervision, Mobile Task Force, Investigations.);
 - Customs Office and Customs Department in Biała Podlaska (**Departments:** Customs Duty Dept., Calculation Elements Dept., Excise Control and Gambling Control Dept., Investigation Dept., Surveillance Dept., Business Supervision Dept.);
 - Customs Office and Customs Department in Lublin (**Departments:** Calculation Elements Dept., Surveillance Dept., Risk Assessment Dept., Investigations Dept., Business Supervision Dept., Excise and Gambling Dept., Customs Duty Dept.);
 - Customs Department in Puławy;
 - Customs Department in Kowalewo;
 - Customs Department in Małaszewicze;
 - Customs Department in Sławatycze;
 - Customs Department in Terespol;
 - Customs Department in Koroszyń and the Borderline Counter-Crime Office in Terespol;
 - Customs Department in Dorohusk and the Borderline Counter-Crime Office in Dorohusk.

- Customs Office in Katowice:
 - Customs Bureau in Katowice (Departments: Business Supervision Dept., Surveillance Dept., Customs Duty Dept., Calculation Elements Dept., Excise and Gambling Dept., Investigations Dept.);
 - Customs Bureau in Rybnik—personnel taking part in anti-corruption course (07.11.2011);
 - Customs Bureau in Częstochowa—personnel taking part in anti-corruption course (5.10.2011);
 - Customs Department in Sławków;
 - Customs Department in Pyrzowice;
 - Customs Department in Czechowice-Dziedzice.

Although it was assumed that in principle all personnel should have taken part in the research, we managed—due to considerable time constraints—to work with employees who were present at the very moment of surveying. The survey took place from October 2011 to November 2011.

As a result of the questionnaire-based survey, 899 completed questionnaires were gathered, which constituted a highly representative sample. The data were subjected to subsequent statistical analyses and calculations. The sample is characterized by a slight numerical domination of employees originating from Biała Podlaska. The reason for this specific choice is the fact that the Biała Podlaska Customs Chamber faces the over-average risk exposure due to the nature of customs duties at the borderline of European Community. The breakdown of respondents according to the place of their employment is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' places of employment

| Customs Chambers | Number | Percent |
|------------------|--------|---------|
| Katowice | 242 | 26.9 |
| Gdynia | 276 | 30.7 |
| Biała Podlaska | 381 | 42.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

Our analysis takes a variable referring to an individual's basic place of employment into consideration. The variable is respectively expressed as Customs Chambers in (1) Katowice, (2) Biała Podlaska, and (3) Gdynia. We also concluded that taking the above-mentioned sub-units of employment (expressed respectively as customs departments, bureaus or offices) would be counterproductive because of creating too complex a sub-categorization.

More males than females took part in the survey (table 2). In this case, the disproportion is caused by the sheer specificity of employment in each of the surveyed facilities. The disproportion is, therefore, not particularly significant to the analysis.

Table 2. Gender distribution

| Gender | Number | Percent |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| Male | 501 | 55.7 |
| Female | 370 | 41.2 |
| Not indicated | 28 | 3.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The surveyed personnel, in the main, constitutes of employees having their own families. The majority of respondents declare being in a marital union and having children. The detailed data are shown as tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Respondents' marital status

| Respondents' marital status | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| Single | 181 | 20.1 |
| Married | 687 | 76.5 |
| Not indicated | 31 | 3.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

Table 4. Respondents who have children

| Respondents having children | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| No | 169 | 18.8 |
| Yes | 690 | 76.8 |
| Not indicated | 38 | 4.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The respondents can be inscribed within a plethora of age categories. Their work experiences are also differentiated. The biggest number of respondents are between 46 and 55 years of age and have been employed by the Customs Service for 16 to 20 years. The detailed data are presented by tables 5 and 6:

Table 5. Age distribution

| Age | Number | Percent |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| 18–25 | 4 | 0.4 |
| 26–35 | 192 | 21.4 |
| 36–45 | 383 | 42.7 |
| 46–55 | 244 | 27.1 |
| 56–65 | 44 | 4.9 |
| More than 65 | 1 | 0.1 |
| Not indicated | 31 | 3.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

Table 6. Respondents’ work experience

| Work experience | Number | Percent |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Less than 6 years | 138 | 15.4 |
| 6–10 years | 139 | 15.5 |
| 11–15 years | 150 | 16.7 |
| 16–20 years | 298 | 33.0 |
| 21–25 years | 68 | 7.6 |
| 26–30 years | 18 | 2.0 |
| 31–35 years | 25 | 2.8 |
| More than 35 years | 9 | 1.0 |
| Not indicated | 54 | 6.0 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

Since the socio-demographic data constitute important variables to be taken into account, the above-mentioned breakdowns are significant for the further examination, including their roles as independent variables of in-depth correlation analyses.

Chapter Three

Structural and Organizational Determinants of Corruption-Related Risks

1. Introduction

The concept of organization, sociologically speaking, has several distinct connotations. The term, for instance, may be conceived as a factor which renders the functioning of social systems possible. Concomitantly, the notion of organization is very often defined as a specific “alignment” of societal relationships, multilateral dependencies, and legally or customarily regulated social actions. These structural elements constitute both a manifestation of social collectivities comprising individuals motivated to fulfill shared objectives, as well as representations of diversified social, professional and demographic structures (Januszek and Sikora 1998, 33). In this specific interpretative context, one may observe that contemporary sociological methodologies frequently deploy the term “system” which—as opposed to an abstract idea of “social structure”—puts specific emphasis of the agential, action-related arrangement of elements within larger social organizations. As Anthony Giddens sees it:

The social systems in which structure is recursively implicated, on the contrary, comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space. Analyzing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction. (1984, 25)

The idea of organization becomes, therefore, indicative of a certain manifestation of social structure which is being constituted⁷ by means of collectively undertaken actions and multilateral interactions. In this specific sense, the notion should be associated especially with institutions that have been created in order to fulfill socially significant objectives. Hence, the concept of organization may boil down to the idea of a social structure established in order to accomplish diversified societal objectives (cf. Kołczyński and Sztumski 2003, 8).

The Customs Service can be conceived as a model example of thus understood organization. It means, as a consequence, that sociological analyses undertaken in this specific field of interest could be inscribed within a theoretical and methodological framework of the sociology of organization. The same is true of social pathologies disturbing diverse aspects of the Customs Service's organization and its functioning. These organizational malfeasances could be studied from a perspective of structural determinants paving the way for distortions taking place in the process of objective accomplishment. In this context, the special emphasis should be placed upon the phenomenon of corruption which nowadays constitutes one of the main difficulties affecting diverse economic, political or public organizations.

The problem of corruption may be analyzed with reference to a number of distinct contexts. In those cases, however, one is obliged to specify a parade of determinants and consequences of corrupt exchanges which manifest themselves in a plentitude of circumstances related to diverse actions undertaken by the Customs Service officers. Hence, it is highly advisable to start our analysis with reflections concerning organizational and structural determinants of corrupt exchanges. An investigation of this sort is focused on the causes of corruption which are inscribed profoundly in organizational structures as well as occupational roles implicit in them.

2. The Patterns of Interpreting Legal Regulations

When investigating into problems associated with the dynamics of social groups and groupings, it is a methodological imperative to refer to the basic features of a social organization. In the context of formal social groups, the applied rules of conduct are codified as a system of precise, transparent norms available to individuals in a written form of bylaws, codes, and other documents delineating the

⁷ The term has not been deployed coincidentally. It is typical of contemporary sociological theories to see social structures and systems as being "constituted" by the creative powers of individual and collective agency (see Giddens 1984).

scope of duties and privileges characterizing the organization's personnel. Formal rules are usually responsible for regulating both interpersonal relationships within organizations, as well as the organization's interaction with the social environment outside. The process of formalization, thus, is a natural consequence of having social actions organized and systematized. Groups of individuals who are in a position to recognize clearly stated shared objectives are, at the same time, fashioned by the very existence of solid organizational norms and reliable means of their execution. The more systematized a given organization is and the more complex its functioning becomes, the stronger the process of bureaucratization is discernible (Kołczyński and Sztumski 2003, 23–24). Hence, it is little wonder that organizational or bureaucratic complexities and the sophistication of formal procedures have always been problems of the uppermost interest to sociological investigation.⁸

Sets of rules orchestrating the functioning of formal organizations must be exceptionally precise due to the specific role of such institutions in every society. If these rules are not sufficiently precise, the scope for possible misuse becomes extended. When perceived from a single individual's point of view, this process may be rooted in a necessity to interpret legal regulations single-handedly by each employee. At this point, one may refer to a sociologically conventional conception of "anomie." The term is very often defined as a disruption of structural order which takes place as a consequence of disparities observed between socially appropriate objectives (values), as well as socially legitimate means available for reaching the goals in question (norms). The theory of anomie, to cut a long story short, predicts that with the absence of relevant norms, values of a culture may turn counterproductive in a way that they can motivate behavior that, at the end of the day, becomes contradictory with reference to the pre-existent axiological imperatives (Merton 1968, 211–212). One may, therefore, postulate that when a firm coherence of axiological and normative system is being lost, negative assessments as to the efficiency and legitimacy of cultural rules are being disseminated among the organization's members. This process, in turn, gives rise to the need for searching for optional behavioral strategies and models. Needless to say, these models tend to aim rather at a fulfillment of individualized interests, rather than the collective ones.

If one takes the aforementioned postulates as a starting point for our analysis, it becomes evident that one should commence the sociological investigation of corruption risks by assuming a more detailed perspective on respondents' evaluations of legal procedures available at their workplace. Since the legal procedures and formal rules of conduct should constitute a coherent,

⁸ At this point, one may refer to Max Weber's insights into the "iron cage" of rationalization (see Weber 1997 [1947]).

well-organized axio-normative system, the officers’ opinions on the matter are crucial as far as the forthcoming analyses are concerned. At this point, one could observe that the existence of unambiguous and robust relationships within a given system of formal rules and regulations is a critical factor ensuring that the personnel’s decisions are taken instantaneously and, likewise, undertaken actions are effective.

The consistency of rules responsible for indicating relevant action strategies—when analyzed from a perspective of the deployed questionnaire—turns out to be a challenging matter. This weakness, in turn, points to certain shortcomings as far as the interconnections between legal articles are concerned. Only 3% of the respondents perceive legal articles or bylaws in terms of a coherent and effective system of legal regulation. One in three officials is willing to declare that the legal regulations are coherent and effective when seen as a system, but contain certain gaps. The most widespread opinion (50,4% of all indications) regards legal articles utilized by the Customs Service as being rather incoherent and ineffective. Moreover, the application of legal mechanisms triggers manifold problems in the practice of everyday work. It is worth to take notice that almost one in ten claims that the rules are totally incoherent and ineffective to the point that they cease to function as a convenient system of regulation. In this case, the legal guidelines are perceived to constitute an overstretched aggregation of contradictory obligations (see table 7).

Table 7. The assessment of legal regulations in respondents’ practice of everyday work

| The assessment of legal regulations | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Legal regulations constitute a coherent and effective system | 24 | 2.7 |
| Legal regulations are usually coherent and effective, but contain shortcomings when seen as a system | 327 | 36.4 |
| Legal regulations are not coherent and effective. Their application causes problems in many real-life situations | 454 | 50.4 |
| Legal regulations are not coherent and effective. They constitute an overstretched aggregate of contradictory obligations | 87 | 9.7 |
| Not indicated | 7 | 0.8 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

An in-depth statistical analysis shows that the expressed opinions are not dependable upon the localization of a given Customs Chamber. The same applies to respondents’ sex. Yet, statistical correlations occur between the provided assessments and respondents’ age, as well as their work experience. Younger officers and respondents of shorter work experience are more willing to define legal regulations as being coherent and effective. The aforementioned relationships are not, however, statistically significant, so their detailed analysis may be omitted at this point.

When the received data are scrutinized and analyzed, one may discern a serious problem as far as the elementary level of the organizational functioning is concerned. It seems that the organization's normative integration—conceived as a continuity between norms and values which are socially accepted and practically operational—is under a serious threat. If normative patterns are not clear enough, when applied norms do not define human behavior precisely enough, if group values do not take the relevant norms into consideration, a process of normative disintegration takes place (Turowski 1999, 131). This may constitute a potential danger to the functioning of the Customs Service. What is being manifested at this very moment is signs and traces of normative inconsistencies which, in the long run, may be conducive to the increase in corruption risk and, consequently, may throw the whole organization out of balance. Moreover, one must be aware of the fact that the perception of legal rules as being incoherent and ineffective may potentially motivate the Customs Service officers to seek for their own models of action and behavioral strategies that go well beyond the organization's formal predicaments.

The notion of innovation occupies a central place among the types of deviant adaptive actions oriented at the improvement of one's life situation. The term, as Robert K. Merton sees it, is defined as a type of adaptation to structural requirements in which an emphasis is laid upon achieving one's objectives in spite of the absence of institutionalized, legal means of goal accomplishment (Merton 1968, 195–203). It seems, therefore, that acts of receiving the corruption-related benefits may be seen as an example of innovation understood from the aforementioned perspective. Corrupt exchanges ensure objective achievement by means of both omitting generally accepted norms of conduct and assuming alternative ways of acting which are, on the one hand, socially negative and, on the other hand, useful. Therefore, corrupt exchanges may fulfill ambiguous functions in incoherent systems of legal regulations. Thus, taking part in corruption could be sometimes seen in terms of an informal and acceptable strategy of acting. Here, the strategy of innovation may spring from the incoherence of axiological and normative systems whose maladaptive character is visible, especially when the external requirements of macro-structural origin are taken into account. Consequently, to conclude this part of the argument, one is in a position to claim that there are certain drawbacks affecting the functioning of the Customs Service's organizational structure. The shortcomings may result in the increase of corruption risk, especially when the Customs Service officers' individual actions are taken into consideration.

The aforementioned line of argumentation is supported by an analysis focused on perceptions of coherence and effectiveness with regard to legal articles typical of the Customs Service. This problem is inevitably and directly related to the aforementioned issue stressing the incoherence of the regulatory system applied. Our analyses legitimize a hypothesis postulating that those ap-

plied normative frameworks, which give sense to actions oriented at goal accomplishment, suffer from organizational shortcomings caused by the lack of cohesion of the relevant regulatory system. When a necessity to take decisions single-handedly is faced, a conflict of roles may take place. Under such circumstances individuals are very often motivated to reject formal rules and pursuit maladaptive innovations. This also alleviates a feeling of discomfort accompanying corrupt exchanges. In the long run, the process may lead to the decomposition of normative frameworks of the whole organization of the Customs Service (Turowski 1999, 131).

From the above-delineated perspective, the distribution of answers provided to the question concerning respondents' perceptions of legal regulations seems disturbing. Almost one-third of the respondents (31.6%) declare that a necessity to interpret legal regulations individually is very common. These declarations suggest, to put it otherwise, that the volume of criticism in this respect is very significant. Besides, one must take notice of the fact that almost half of the respondents claim that the necessity to provide individual interpretations of legal procedures occurs from time to time. Little more than 15% of all respondents (15.4%) declare that the necessity occurs very rarely. At the same time, the number of officers who claim that there is no necessity of this kind is very limited and amounts to 6.5% (table 8).

Table 8. A necessity to interpret legal regulations single-handedly as assessed by respondents

| A necessity to interpret legal regulations single-handedly | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Very often | 284 | 31.6 |
| From time to time | 413 | 45.8 |
| Very rarely | 138 | 15.4 |
| Never | 58 | 6.5 |
| Not indicated | 6 | 0.7 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The necessity to provide individual interpretations of legal regulations may be considered in terms of a factor responsible for an increase in corruption risk. In this specific case, risk is a consequence of decisions taken individually; that is, without a facilitation of having a ready-made set of clear-cut legal interpretations at one's disposal. Needless to say, the situation constitutes a serious organizational drawback. It is a significant structural gap whose possible ramifications as far as the increase of corruption risk could be disastrous.

Respondents' opinions in this respect are not significantly determined by such independent variables as sex, age, or work experience. What is interesting, however, is the statistically significant relationship between the expressed opin-

ions and respondents' place of work. One may hypothetically assume that the officers employed by the Customs Chamber in Biała Podlaska are more liable to declare the necessity to interpret legal regulations by themselves.⁹ However, our analysis does not confirm the hypothesis. It turns out that legal ambiguities are indicated most often by the officials employed in Katowice. Almost 40% of them (39%) affirm that they are very often forced to interpret legal regulations individually. At the same time, the relevant figure for other Customs Chambers does not exceed 30%. In addition to that, the employees from Biała Podlaska are most frequently in a position to claim that legal regulations are so precise that there is virtually no necessity to interpret them single-handedly. That latter view is expressed by almost 10% (9.5%) of surveyed officers. One must also note that in the remaining groups a similar view is expressed, on average, by one in twenty respondents (table 9).

Table 9. Localizations of the Customs Offices and a necessity to interpret legal regulations single-handedly as assessed by respondents

| Localization | Very often | From time to time | Very rarely | Never | Total |
|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Katowice | 94 (39.0) | 106 (44.0) | 31 (12.9) | 10 (4.1) | 241 (100.0) |
| Gdynia | 78 (28.4) | 138 (50.1) | 47 (17.1) | 12 (4.4) | 275 (100.0) |
| Biała Podlaska | 112 (29.7) | 169 (44.9) | 60 (15.9) | 36 (9.5) | 377 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 284 (31.8) | 413 (46.2) | 138 (15.5) | 58 (6.5) | 893 (100.0) |

Note: Percentage values in brackets.

The data indicate disparities as to the assessments concerning the necessity to provide interpretations of legal regulations. At this point a thesis may be postulated: rules regulating occupational duties at the frontier of the European Union tend to be more precise than the relevant norms typical of "internal" customs offices; namely, the ones which do not perform borderline operations directly (the Customs Office in Katowice). Hence, one may conclude that corruption risk is more intense in the internal than external customs offices. It seems that the reason for this disproportion could be attributed to the inequalities as to care vested by Polish regulatory bodies in observing the precision of legal regulations applied to borderline (more risk-prone by their very nature) and internal customs operations.

These conclusions have been confirmed by the analysis of answers provided to the question referring to procedures regulating customs clearances. Respondents, in the main, tend to claim that customs clearance rules are clear and

⁹ The officers employed by the Customs Chamber in Biała Podlaska face many specific circumstances, including the fact of working at the frontier of European Union, the problematic social environment, and other local considerations of cultural descent. These factors are responsible for the increase in number of unpredictable problems to be experienced at work.

precise (table 10). This is an important statement, especially when one realizes that customs clearances are high-risk situations. Although a little more than 4% declare that the rules governing customs clearances are completely precise and clear-cut, more than half of the respondents (50.9%) are willing to claim that an application of customs clearance regulations is only sometimes necessitated by acts of individual interpretation. One in three employees claims that the necessity occurs very often and one in fifteen is willing to admit that the process of customs clearance depends basically on the relevant customs officers' personal will.

Table 10. The assessments of customs clearance regulations

| Customs clearance regulations are | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Very precise and can be applied easily | 37 | 4.1 |
| Moderately precise—their application is sometimes necessitated by individual interpretation | 458 | 50.9 |
| Imprecise—their application is very often necessitated by individual interpretation | 318 | 35.4 |
| Too vague—customs clearances are a matter of an employee's will | 69 | 7.7 |
| Not indicated | 17 | 1.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

An in-depth analysis reveals no statistically significant relationships between the aforementioned answers and the localization of a given Customs Chamber, respondents' age, sex, or work experience. All surveyed employees shared very similar viewpoints as to the problem of rules and regulations governing processes of customs clearance.

One may, therefore, say that, in spite of the aforementioned regulatory and management shortcomings, the functioning of Customs Service is well delimited in the area of regulations concerning such high-risk processes as customs clearances. Hence, one must emphasize that a system of coherent and precise legal regulation is a must for an organization like the Customs Service. Any organizational or managerial drawbacks in this particular aspect are liable to cause an increase in corruption risk in the foreseeable future.

Customs-related field operations must be taken into consideration in this context. It seems that corruption risk is most intense in this specific case. After all, all employees are subordinated to the routine of formal and informal surveillance at their workplaces. Yet, when field operations take place, the mechanisms are no longer as effective as in a situation of in-door operations. In the previous case, face-to-face interactions between officials and lay people are much more probable, which in itself may increase the risk of taking part in diverse types of corrupt exchanges. Therefore, a set of uniform and precise rules

of field operations must be implemented in order to attenuate corruption risks implicit in this specific context.

What is especially interesting in this context is the opinions concerning the rules of field operations expressed by the Customs Service employees themselves (table 11). More than half of them are convinced that there is a necessity to implement outstandingly precise regulations rendering legitimate field operations possible. These voices do not tend, however, to be motivated by expressed perceptions of corruption risks. In this case, the relevant motivation is related to a need for limiting a scope of personal responsibility in situations where the imperative of interpreting legal articles by oneself occurs. Almost one-third of respondents are in a position to see the necessity to make the said regulations more precise. Only one in eight is convinced that these regulations should be rendered more precise due to the high level of risk attributed to field operations.

Table 11. A necessity of having more precise regulations concerning customs field operations as assessed by the Customs Service officers

| A necessity of having more precise regulations | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| The necessity is caused by corruption risks accompanying customs field operations | 125 | 13.9 |
| The necessity is caused by diverse problems accompanying customs field operations, but not necessarily by corruption risks | 509 | 56.6 |
| There's no necessity of that kind | 251 | 27.9 |
| Not indicated | 14 | 1.6 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The above-presented table could be read as a hint pointing to an imperative to delineate more precise procedures regulating customs field operations. One may, moreover, assume that their actual impact on risk mitigation policies could be possibly more intense, than the level of influence indicated and expected by respondents. In addition to that, postulating more unambiguous regulations may result in the increase of work comfort, as well as labor effectiveness and goal achievement. When perceived as a group of individuals aiming to fulfill common objectives, an organization stays effective as long as it functions within a framework of social order. The order is based, first and foremost, upon relevant strategies of management (including human resources management) and a system of norms and sanctions ensuring that both individuals and work units may work effectively (Januszek and Sikora 1998, 190).

The correlation analyses indicate that the problem is perceived similarly by respondents characterized by varying age, sex, or work experience. Likewise, a place of employment does not constitute a factor differentiating the perceptions. Hence, the aforementioned conclusions and postulates may be conceived

as general characteristics typical of all employees working for the Customs Service.

One may admit, to conclude, that the depersonalization and objectification of functioning can be seen as effective management strategies which foster structural integration within a given organization. It means that occupational roles—as far as their types or contents are concerned—are relatively independent of acting individuals. At the same time, rules and regulations delineating human work are far from being arbitrary. One must, however, remember that overstretched systems of regulations are not conducive to human innovation or creativeness and, hence, may hinder the process of organizational development. Furthermore, their execution could, at the end of the day, consume the majority of organization's financial resources (Turowski 1999, 151–152).

3. The Organization of Work: Supervision and Motivation

When investigating into corruption risks, one must not forget about an imperative to conceptualize the encountered organizational order as a certain totality. It is worth emphasizing that objective schemes and procedures are not only at stake at this point. What is equally significant are subjective perceptions of organizational order as well as individual assessments of rules upon which the organization is founded.

In order to research into this matter, a question concerning customs clearances was formulated. The issue is generally assessed positively. One-tenth of the surveyed population see no significant problems as far as the process of customs clearance is concerned. Although certain infrequently occurring problems are detected, more than two-thirds are willing to assess customs clearances positively. On the other hand, it is worth taking notice that 11.5% perceive customs clearances in negative light, claiming that irrelevant solutions are responsible for occupational stress (one in thirty respondents claims that the drawbacks cause permanent stress) (table 12).

As we hypothetically assumed, the factor which may significantly differentiate respondents' answers is a place of work. The officials employed at the Biała Podlaska Customs Chamber tend not to be most critical about the implemented occupational procedures: one-fourth of the group are willing to assess negatively the procedures of customs clearance, whereas the relevant figures measured for the other offices tend not to be higher than 13%, approximately. The result may be interpreted by means of referring to the socio-cultural profile of the region, especially by the fact that the area constitutes the eastern frontier of the European Union.

Table 12. The assessments of work organization with respect to customs clearances

| The assessments of work organization | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| The work is organized very well—customs clearances are steady and smooth | 93 | 10.3 |
| The work is organized rather well—customs clearances are often smooth and steady, but hectic periods do occur | 603 | 67.1 |
| The work is organized rather badly—customs clearances tend to be slow, waiting lines form quite often, which causes stress | 103 | 11.5 |
| The work is organized very badly—customs clearances are way too slow and waiting lines form themselves too frequently | 29 | 3.2 |
| Not indicated | 71 | 7.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

It is also worth emphasizing that the customs clearance procedures are best assessed by respondents from Gdynia (assessments made by respondents from Katowice assume the middle position in the ranking (table 13).

Table 13. Respondents' places of work and their assessments of organization at particular workplaces

| Localization | The work is organized... | | | | Total |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| | very well | rather well | rather badly | very badly | |
| Katowice | 23 (11.2) | 157 (76.2) | 19 (9.2) | 7 (3.4) | 206 (100.0) |
| Gdynia | 35 (13.6) | 205 (79.5) | 13 (5.0) | 5 (1.9) | 258 (100.0) |
| Biała Podlaska | 35 (9.6) | 241 (66.2) | 71 (19.5) | 17 (4.7) | 364 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 93 (11.2) | 603 (72.9) | 103 (12.4) | 29 (3.5) | 828 (100.0) |

Note: The option "not indicated" has been omitted; Percentage values in brackets.

In order to understand the differences, one has to refer to more general social considerations and treat them as deciding factors in the functioning of the Customs Chambers. This line of interpretation cannot, however, be completed at the expense of dismissing local, organizational considerations. Although the character of local borderline traffic and its intensity definitely contribute to perceptions concerning the customs clearance organization, one cannot analyze the problem without referring to particular organizational solutions implemented at a given customs facility. Organizational drawbacks should be seen as factors influencing the intensity of corrupt exchanges, as well as the personnel's readiness to perceive corruption in terms of a fully-fledged alternative as far as earning money is concerned. Concluding this part of the argument, it must also be stated that the independent variables (e.g.: sex, age, and work experience) do not introduce statistically significant differences across respondents' preferences.

Each organization is based upon a kind of hierarchical structure in which subordinate and superior positions can be observed. An increase in organizational formalization is, moreover, tantamount to the precision with which these differences are defined and articulated. The distribution of objectives and competences is also indispensable as far as the realization of socially significant objectives is concerned. The virtue of functional integration—conceived here as a primary means rendering objective fulfillment possible—is fostered by such a distribution of organizational functions which is clear-cut, mutually exclusive and, at the same time, exhaustive, in-depth and rational enough so that particular employees and whole work units know the scope of workplace responsibilities (Turowski 1999, 144). Superior individuals may enjoy having admission to certain privileges, but they are also in a position of obligation to engage in more complex projects, bearing responsibility for their subordinates and, finally, executing supervision over them.

The hierarchical structure of the Customs Service has been delineated with extreme precision. The structure manifests itself as a well-defined distribution of tasks, duties and privileges accessible at the workplace. In this specific context, employees' assessments concerning relationships between superordinate and subordinate occupational roles and positions may be regarded as a sociologically important matter. These evaluations may exert considerable influence upon the level of corruption risk experienced. Here, the absence (or misplacement) of supervision may, as a consequence, result in an increase of readiness to adopt ambivalent attitudes towards the organization's key rules and regulations.

Respondents were granted an opportunity to evaluate their professional relationships with superiors. Since one may hypothetically assume that the attitudes would be mostly critical, the collected data are quite telling and significant. The relationship of subordination is, after all, inevitably associated with a feeling of discomfort taking place as a result of being dominated by one's superior. This specific emotional situation can, consequently, breed negative opinions or attitudes towards one's superiors. The hypothesis, however, cannot be verified by the received data. Almost half of the respondents are willing to assess supervision as being adequate and justified. Accordingly, it is characterized as a sign of support which may be considered as a true foundation of mutual aid relationships.

Only one in three respondents is convinced that the workplace supervision is excessive and unjustified. These respondents declare that the process of command and control is mostly motivated by the lack of trust on the superiors' behalf. Almost one in eight tends to assess the workplace supervision as inadequate, which may be a result of the lack of interest vested in employees' work (table 14).

Table 14. The workplace supervision on behalf of respondents' superiors

| The workplace supervision | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| The supervision is adequate and justified. It is a sign of support and a basis for mutual aid | 426 | 47.4 |
| The supervision is excessive and unjustified. It is a result of absence of trust | 323 | 35.9 |
| The supervision is inadequate. It springs from the lack of interest in the employees' work | 121 | 13.5 |
| Not indicated | 29 | 3.2 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

When the specificity of the Customs Service is taken into consideration, one could assume that its internal procedures of supervision were quite complex and, therefore, noticeable. Indeed, the analysis shows that the number of respondents who claim that supervision is inadequate is relatively small. It also turns out that the supervisory procedures are not assessed as something negative in itself.

Respondents are willing to perceive their superiors' interest vested in their work as a symptom of support, rather than a piece of evidence suggesting that interpersonal trust has eroded. This should be interpreted in terms of an acknowledgement stressing that the currently existing internal supervisory procedures are relevant. One may, however, suggest that certain changes in this particular respect should be applied. This is especially true of postulates emphasizing efficiency improvement without a need to raise the system's oppressiveness. Yet, it does not change the fact suggesting that the system is positively assessed by the Customs Service officials. Moreover, the data seem to indicate that the specificity of implemented supervisory mechanism is conducive to a minimization of corruption risks (only a small proportion of respondents claim that supervision is inadequate).

An in-depth analysis reveals a couple of interesting interdependencies between certain independent variables and the opinions expressed by respondents. It turns out that the localization is one more time a factor differentiating the received opinions. The employees in Gdynia are least critical as far as the problem is concerned: almost two-thirds of them perceive supervision as something positive. The employees from Białą Podlaska and Katowice are less willing to express such optimistic viewpoints (positive notes are given by less than half of them).

The correlation analysis also indicates that the respondents from the Katowice region are most often in a position to declare that supervision is excessive, which, in their view, is a consequence of the authorities' lack of trust. At the same time, the employees from Białą Podlaska most often claim that the supervisory mechanisms are inadequate, which is a result of the lack of interest vested in their work.

Table 15. Places of work and employees' assessments of supervision on the behalf of respondents' superiors

| Localization | The assessments of supervision on behalf of the respondents' superiors | | | Total |
|----------------|---|--|--|-------------|
| | the supervision is adequate and justified. It is the sign of support and a basis for mutual aid | the supervision is excessive and unjustified. It is the result of absence of trust | the supervision is inadequate. It springs from the lack of interest in employees' work | |
| Katowice | 99 (43.0) | 105 (45.7) | 26 (11.3) | 230 (100.0) |
| Gdynia | 161 (59.6) | 71 (26.3) | 38 (14.1) | 270 (100.0) |
| Biała Podlaska | 166 (44.9) | 147 (39.7) | 57 (15.4) | 370 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 426 (49.0) | 323 (37.1) | 121 (13.9) | 870 (100.0) |

Note: The option "not indicated" has been omitted; percentage values in brackets.

On the basis of the data above, one may come to a conclusion that supervisory procedures implemented by respondents' superiors are differentiated with respect to individuals' places of work. In the context of corruption risks and anti-corruption policies, the number of critical assessments expressed by people working in the risk-prone environment is particularly disturbing. Hence, a postulate suggesting the intensification of supervisory procedures—especially in high-risk regions (i.e. the frontier of the European Union)—seems relevant and justified.

There is also another relationship to be observed, which, this time, refers to a correlation taking place between respondents' sex and their assessments of supervisory procedures. It turns out that males are more critical in formulating their opinions than females. Fifty-three percent of female employees, as compared to 46% of male employees, are willing to evaluate the applied forms of supervision as being adequate and justified. Differences may also be observed among the group of critically-mined respondents. Here, female officials are more willing to perceive supervision as inadequate, whereas male officials tend to declare its excessive and unjustified character (in this case the difference is bigger than 10%).

Table 16. Respondents' gender and the assessments of supervision on the behalf of respondents' superiors

| Respondents' gender | The assessments of supervision on behalf of the respondents' superiors | | | Total |
|---------------------|---|--|--|-------------|
| | the supervision is adequate and justified. It is the sign of support and a basis for mutual aid | the supervision is excessive and unjustified. It is the result of absence of trust | the supervision is inadequate. It springs from the lack of interest in employees' work | |
| Males | 226 (46.1) | 205 (41.9) | 59 (12.0) | 490 (100.0) |
| Females | 191 (53.4) | 106 (29.6) | 61 (17.0) | 358 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 417 (49.2) | 311 (36.7) | 120 (14.2) | 848 (100.0) |

Note: The option "not indicated" has been omitted; percentage values in brackets.

These correlations may be successfully explained by means of referring to the issue of gendered differences (assuming a form of personality-based individual differences) between the sexes, as well as by the observed disparities between males' and females' positions within the already existing social structures (table 16). Both matters are not biologically determined and can be understood in terms of socialization processes and their effects. The differences can be explained by referring to a sociological regularity stressing that men are characterized by a stronger need for superiority and independence than women. Moreover, males tend, as a rule, to acquire higher social positions in organizations, especially in hierarchical ones (as in the case of the Customs Service). The aforementioned regularities may be instrumental in the process of reinforcing personal resistance against any forms of control and supervision on behalf of individuals enjoying higher social positions. Hence, one comes across subjective perceptual differences, rather than objective and diversified supervisory procedures implemented with a specific reference to a given employee's sex. In spite of significant differences in answers provided by males and females, it may seem that their specificity does not influence significantly the magnitude of corruption risks. Nevertheless, these gendered differences are worth to be taken into consideration, especially when one is investigating into subjective representations of the supervisory procedures typical of the Customs Service. The differences exert an influence on job satisfaction which, in turn, may recursively determine the level of organizational effectiveness (it may affect predilection to take part in corrupt exchanges to a certain extent).

The analyzed issue should be supplemented by a comparison of respondents' assessments of supervisory procedures with their opinions concerning their roles in the corruption risk attenuation. The correlation analysis shows a significant interrelation between the two variables. It turns out that the respondents who claim that the lack of supervision is an important determinant of corruption hazards are more frequently willing to assess supervisory procedures as inadequate, as compared to the group which declares that there is no significant relationship between the previously mentioned variables. The difference amounts to 15%.

This breakdown confirms the aforementioned thesis postulating that supervision is endowed with special importance as far as corruption prevention is concerned. It turns out that three-quarters of the respondents who appreciate the role of supervision in preventing corruption are, at the same time, willing to claim the inadequacy of the implemented supervisory mechanisms. Furthermore, these respondents declare that the practices of supervision applied express the lack of concern and trust on the superiors' behalf. The results seem to prove that, although the supervisory procedures applied are operational, one should bend over backwards in order to delineate more effective corruption-prevention measures (table 17).

Table 17. The correlation between the estimations pointing to the lack of supervisory procedures conceived in terms of a pro-risk factor, and the assessments of supervision on the behalf of respondents’ superiors

| The lack of supervision and its relation to corruption risk as assessed by respondents | The assessments of supervision on behalf of the respondents’ superiors | | | Total |
|--|---|--|--|-------------|
| | the supervision is adequate and justified. It is the sign of support and a basis for mutual aid | the supervision is excessive and unjustified. It is the result of the absence of trust | the supervision is inadequate. It springs from the lack of interest in employees’ work | |
| Insignificant factor | 362 (48.5) | 295 (39.5) | 90 (12.0) | 747 (100.0) |
| Significant factor | 63 (51.6) | 28 (23.0) | 31 (25.4) | 122 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 425 (48.9) | 323 (37.2) | 121 (13.9) | 869 (100.0) |

Note: The option “not indicated” has been omitted; percentage values in brackets.

One may visualize a number of somewhat different standings as far as organizational effectiveness is concerned. Some theorists claim that excessive control is the best measure to be taken in order to realize the above-mentioned objective, especially when it is coupled with a transparent and consistent division of operational tasks. Yet, this kind of regulation is best effective when one faces employees’ hostility towards the supervisors. When organizations are founded upon the virtue of interpersonal cooperation, the encountered situation tends to be dissimilar. In the latter case, deployment of tight, excessive regulations may discourage employees from being effective; they may consider themselves as deprived of a possibility to fulfill their duties agentially and wholeheartedly (Giddens 2004, 276). When the latter assumption is taken into consideration, one must take care of delineating a middle-of-the-road model of regulation. Since the Customs Service is endowed with its own specific mission, loosening of control may prove being extremely dangerous for the organization’s functional integration. This, in turn, may manifest itself as an increase in corruption risk. On the other hand, however, too tight a control may lead to social apathy and demotivation of employees.

In this specific context, an integration of organizational objectives with the personnel’s individual interests is a crucial matter. There is a number of sociological theories purporting to explain this particular issue. One of the possible approaches to the matter—probably the most appropriate one—is founded upon a firm intellectual conviction stressing that the integration processes take place by means of exerting direct pressure on an individual’s motivations by social structures. This concept, in the main, gestures towards the methodology of structural determinism which lays particular emphasis on the fact that human agency (as manifested by personal motivation, energy, or creativity) is always anchored in the pre-existing structural and systemic resources of social and cultural descent:

Acting people are anchored to this fluid and multi-level social structure by means of the social positions (or statuses) which they occupy. It is via social positions that structures exert their constraining or enabling influence on actors (or more generally, agents). The particular location in the social structure implies that only some selected fragments of the social structure become activated with respect to an agent, or in other words become relevant for the actions. (Sztompka 1991, 126)

Consequently, one may come to a conclusion that systemic, organizational and structural modifications should be orchestrated in such a way as to harmonize individual (personal) and institutional (formal) objectives up to the point at which conflicts of interests would simply cease to exist. Hence, the harmonization would be beneficial for both parties; namely, the employees and the organization considered as a structured totality (cf. Jacher 1993, 24).

Employees should be effectively subjected to organized patterns of regulation and supervision in order to ensure that occupational tasks are fulfilled effectively. Yet, the implementation of a proper system of incentives is also a very important issue. In this sense, one has to remember that forces of structural determinism merely represent one dimension of the social reality. The determinism of this kind is never thorough enough for social environments to produce totally reified individuals (Sztompka 1991, 62–71). Social actors retain their personal agency, which becomes evident in a degree of their willingness to act according to prescribed structural criteria. In other words, a typically human propensity to “act otherwise,” to use Giddens’s apt term, must be taken into account by the deployed mechanisms of supervision and managerial sophistication. Hence, effective managers face the necessity to work out systemic and universally acceptable solutions, the managerial mechanisms that constitute vehicles of transparent and effective criteria according to which workplace gratifications or promotions are granted and distributed across positions within the organizational structure.

The assessment of deployed motivational solutions constitutes one of the most vital problems of our research. Respondents were asked to assess the motivational system which had been implemented in the Customs Service. Their declarations, however, indicate serious shortcomings in this particular aspect of organizational structure.

Almost half of the employees evaluate systemic motivational solutions as very poor. In addition, they claim that the motivational system is only a theoretical construction—it has no practical impact on the workplace. One in five simply declares that there is no motivational system in the organization. As little as one-third tend to perceive the applied motivational system as moderately effective, and only one in thirty relies on the unquestionable effectiveness of the offered solutions.

Table 18. The assessments of motivational system in the Customs Service

| The assessments of motivational system | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| The system works well—diverse measures are in place to motivate us to work more effectively | 28 | 3.1 |
| The system is moderate— there is a lack of effective incentives to work | 292 | 32.5 |
| The system works very badly—it is a purely theoretical construction with no practical application | 397 | 44.2 |
| There is no motivational system in the Customs Service | 169 | 18.8 |
| Not indicated | 13 | 1.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The data above indicate that the situation we are dealing with is very disadvantageous. The Customs Service officials do not feel motivated to work more effectively. One may, therefore, assume that workplace incentives and gratifications are granted randomly. Moreover, the application of motivational measures is disordered, so that they do not represent a fully-fledged system of workplace motivation.

The encountered situation may, as a consequence, encourage people to seek for alternative financial means of uplifting one's living standard. Hence, when taking the above-mentioned data into consideration, it should be emphasized that the implementation of systemic motivational solutions is a must in hierarchical and formal organizations like the Customs Service. When the systemic solutions are not in place, when individual actions are not effectively regulated across various positions in organizational structures, pathologies and disruptions of organizational order occur very frequently. Corruption constitutes, needless to say, one of the most conspicuous manifestations of the process in question.

An in-depth correlation analysis does not reveal interrelations between sex, age or work experience and the discussed issue. A factor which differentiates respondents' assessments is the localization of a given Customs Office, though in this particular case the differences are not as significant as in the previously analyzed correlations. Nevertheless, one may still observe that the employees in Gdynia are more critically-minded than other respondents. These differences are most visible in cases when the provided assessments are most extreme (both in the negative and positive terms). The said discrepancies amount to 4% approximately. When the most critical answers are compared, the relevant hiatus amounts to 7% (Gdynia and Katowice).

Table 19. Place of work and the assessment of motivational system typical of the Customs Service

| Localization | “Motivational system works well” | “Motivational system works moderately” | “Motivational system works very badly—it exists theoretically” | “No motivational system in place” | Total |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Katowice | 11 (4.6) | 77 (32.1) | 114 (47.5) | 38 (15.8) | 240 (100.0) |
| Gdynia | 2 (0.7) | 88 (32.2) | 121 (44.4) | 62 (22.7) | 273 (100.0) |
| Biała Podlaska | 15 (4.0) | 127 (34.0) | 162 (43.5) | 69 (18.5) | 373 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 28 (3.2) | 292 (33.0) | 397 (44.7) | 169 (19.1) | 886 (100.0) |

Note: The option “not indicated” has been omitted; percentage values in brackets.

The obtained data tend to point towards similarities among assessments made by respondents from all the Customs Chambers. The provided evaluations are, in the main, negative and they do not depend upon a localization of particular workplaces. One must bear in mind, however, that the differences are mostly limited to the groups of respondents willing to express extremely negative opinions. No matter how the opinions are differentiated, it must be remembered that the lack of a uniform motivational systems is one of the most severe organizational drawbacks that the Customs Service has to cope with. The problem, furthermore, can be defined as being universal in a way that it affects the overwhelming majority of employees.

The tendency of being corruption-prone—which in itself may be inspired by the lack of sufficient motivation to work effectively—is equally distributed among various groups of employees. Hence, the need to implement effective motivational systems seems to be urgent. One must also remember that both control and supervision, as well as motivation via systems of gratification and penalties constitute equally legitimate ways to ensure functional integration. The organization should utilize the already existing system of workplace gratifications and make it more elaborate since, in practice, it could exert a more significant motivational impact. Yet, on the other hand, it is very difficult to establish a system that would totally comply to the standards of fairness and rightness (Turowski 1999, 151).

4. The Usefulness of Anti-Corruption Courses

The problem of corruption is a crucial leitmotif of various public debates. Corruption is widely discussed in terms of a significant drawback as far as the effective functioning of companies, sole traders, public institutions, or other enterprises is

concerned. It is little wonder that the problem calls for swift and effective solutions. In this context, courses and trainings of diversified kinds are regarded as popular forms of dealing with corruption-related threats. As a principle, they aim to attenuate the pathology by means of postulating effective and practical anti-corruption mechanisms that refer both to individual actions, as well as to whole organizations conceived as integral and functional systems. Needless to say, voicing the problems of corrupt conduct and disseminating anti-corruption procedures are types of organizational tasks that may be implemented in a relatively easy and smooth way. In this context, respondents' assessments concerning the legitimacy of anti-corruption trainings are important issues to discuss. Since respondents' estimations render our evaluation of the usefulness of anti-corruption trainings possible, the opinions gathered in this respect are amongst the most reliable indicators stating the practical legitimacy of such measures.

Respondents were asked to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption training programs (table 20). The majority of them (40%) declare that the courses are useful but, at the same time, cannot be conceived as the sole way to combat corruption. One in three employees claims that since everybody takes responsibility for his/her actions (including actions taken in order to prevent corruption), the trainings are not necessary. As far as extreme views on the matter are concerned, the groups of respondents who tend to formulate them are almost equal. Fourteen percent (approximately) are willing to declare that the courses are either very useful or a waste of the employees' time.

Table 20. The necessity of anti-corruption trainings as assessed by the Customs Service employees

| The necessity of anti-corruption trainings | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| The courses are very useful | 125 | 13.9 |
| The courses seem to be useful, but surely they do not fix the problem of corruption | 340 | 37.8 |
| The courses do not seem to be useful—everybody is individually responsible for combating corruption | 292 | 32.5 |
| The courses are not useful at all—it is a waste of one's time | 126 | 14.0 |
| Not indicated | 16 | 1.8 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The data above is sufficient enough to advance a thesis suggesting that anti-corruption tuitions are generally perceived as being very useful. The courses may be, therefore, seen as a valuable tool for corruption risk attenuation due to the opportunity of highlighting potential risks and postulating anti-corruption strategies. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the courses cannot be regarded as the only way to combat corruption. Instead, they should be treated as one element within a more complicated system designed

specifically to struggle with the problem of corruption. What has to be done for sure is the evaluation of already existing anti-corruption courses, and reflection upon a possibility of their further development and amelioration.

An in-depth correlation analysis does not reveal any statistically significant relationships between the given assessments as well as the respondents' sex, age, or work experience. However, it is worth noticing that employees in Gdynia are a little less willing to appreciate anticorruption courses than other respondents. The differences in this area of interest amount to 7% (table 21).

Table 21. Respondents' workplaces and the perceived necessity of anti-corruption trainings

| Respondents' workplaces | "The courses are very useful" | "The courses seem to be useful, but surely they don't fix the problem of corruption" | "The courses don't seem to be useful—everybody is responsible individually for combating corruption" | "The courses are not useful at all—it is a waste of one's time" | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---|-------------|
| Katowice | 33 (14.0) | 98 (41.5) | 68 (28.8) | 37 (15.7) | 236 (100.0) |
| Gdynia | 30 (11.0) | 93 (34.1) | 106 (38.8) | 44 (16.1) | 273 (100.0) |
| Biała Podlaska | 62 (16.6) | 149 (39.8) | 118 (31.6) | 45 (12.0) | 374 (100.0) |
| <i>Total</i> | 125 (14.2) | 340 (38.4) | 292 (33.1) | 126 (14.3) | 883 (100.0) |

Note: The option "not indicated" has been omitted; percentage values in brackets.

The said differences may be interpreted in two ways. First of all, we may deal with the qualitative differences in terms of exposure to corruption risks. The disparities are triggered by specificities of the Customs Chambers analyzed in our research. Given the differences between workplaces, one may conclude that anti-corruption trainings may be more effective as soon as certain types of organizational circumstances are met. This, in turn, may affect respondents' perceptions concerning the problem.

Second of all, the intensity and quality of anti-corruption tuitions may vary across the Customs Offices. Hence, taking care of adjusting them to the circumstances of a particular workplace, as well as observing the quality of the implemented courses are a must.

5. Human Resources Management

In the context of structural and organizational determinants of corruption, the selection of future employees is an important issue at stake. It seems pretty obvious that psychological features, personality traits, psychic dispositions exert

a powerful impact on the way how professional duties are being fulfilled. This is true of all organizations, but it is endowed with a special significance as far as institutions of public security are concerned. In the latter case, a dysfunctional selection of human resources is not only a reason for organizational inefficiency, but may also lead to internal pathologies and goal-attainment dysfunctions that, in the long run, may be manifested as problems affecting social life in the macro-scale.

Hence, it seems interesting to observe the employees’ subjective perceptions of solutions applied to the area of human resources management. Only 2% of the surveyed population say that the Customs Service employs individuals having relevant competences and predispositions. Almost half of the respondents declare that the majority of the workers are not qualified and prepared adequately for this kind of a job. Simultaneously, 40% claim that the Customs Service’s human resources consist of individuals of relevant predispositions and competences. One must not forget that almost one in ten respondents is willing to admit that the organization employs inadequate personnel.

Table 22. Human resources management as assessed by the Customs Service employees

| Human resources management | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| The Customs Service employs people of relevant competences and predispositions | 15 | 1.7 |
| The majority of employees in the Customs Service have relevant competences and predispositions | 373 | 41.5 |
| The Customs Service employs a lot of people of irrelevant competences and predispositions | 425 | 47.3 |
| The majority of employees in the Customs Service have irrelevant competences and predispositions | 73 | 8.1 |
| Not indicated | 13 | 1.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The table above suggests that we have come across a rather unnerving kind of situation. Although one has to remember that subjective perceptions, important as they may be, cannot by the sole yardstick used to evaluate human resources, the received data show shortcomings as far as competences and predispositions of the Customs Service officials are concerned.

An in-depth correlation analysis does not reveal any significant interrelationships between the perceptions and respondents’ age, sex, work experience, or a place of work. All respondents are characterized by similar viewpoints, which means that the analyzed problems are endowed with a more holistic significance and affect the organization’s structures and departments. The provided assessments may be, in the main, motivated by the presence of inefficient recruitment procedures. However, it seems constructive to proceed with our

analysis further on and check if the opinions are related to all levels of organizational structures or, contrariwise, they are significantly differenced with respect to employees assuming lower and higher ranks.

In this particular context, the recruitment procedures should be researched into more elaborately. As in the previous case, individual perceptions may be conceived as a valuable source of additional data to be deployed in order to understand human resources management more profoundly. Therefore, we have decided to combine the two problems in one question and ask employees to assess recruitment procedures with reference to high and low positions in the organization's structure.

The received data point towards an interesting tendency: recruitment procedures aiming to take on employees for "frontline" posts are assessed significantly higher. It means that low-rank Customs Service officials are, according to respondents, better suited for this kind of job, than individuals who assume positions in higher management (this view is shared by almost 60% of the surveyed employees). A contradictory opinion is formulated by 16.5% of respondents who declare that recruitment procedures are more effective in the case of senior management. A similar group of employees (14%) do not observe any significant changes in the both types of recruitment procedures.

Table 23. The efficiency of recruitment procedure with reference to low and high ranks in the organizational structure

| The efficiency of recruitment procedure | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| The procedures are characterized by similar efficiency | 126 | 14.0 |
| The efficiency is higher with respect to „frontline“ employees and lower with reference to the management | 588 | 65.4 |
| The efficiency is higher with respect to the management and lower with reference to "frontline" employees | 148 | 16.5 |
| Not indicated | 37 | 4.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

An in-depth correlation analysis shows no statistically significant interrelationships between the assessments and respondents' age, sex, work experience, or a place of work. Hence, the aforementioned tendencies may be regarded as being universal in their scope.

An analysis of most serious drawbacks affecting the recruitment procedures may constitute an interesting extension of the above-mentioned interpretations. Respondents were asked to indicate problems that might be seen as potentially significant for the processes of recruitment. They were told to choose three most significant options from all the possibilities included. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate the most important issue out of the three previously selected.

The data analysis leads to a conclusion that the most unnerving drawback in the process of recruitment is taking on one’s relatives who do not possess a relevant level of qualifications. The problem is indicated by more than half of respondents. In addition to that, 13% declare it to be the most substantial drawback dogging the effectiveness of recruitment processes. Taking on individuals without relevant psychic dispositions (e.g. people who are not resistant to stress factors) is also seen in a negative way (more than 40% of all indications). The same applies to employing people who do not have the relevant qualifications for the job (e.g. those who do not know how to work with a computer). The latter problem is indicated by more than 30% of respondents.

The remaining factors are indicated much less frequently. It is noteworthy that taking on people without relevant personality profiles (e.g. individuals who may be driven by penchant for corruption) is, generally, seen as a less significant factor. Its importance is suggested by 20% approximately and its primary role is indicated by only 3%.

The problem of discrimination against women and young people is the least important factor in this context. From respondents’ perspective, the aforementioned problems seem to lack any special significance (table 24).

Table 24. Factors having negative influence on the effectiveness of recruitment procedures

| Factors | Significant drawback | | Most significant drawback | | Total | |
|--|----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | frequency | percent | frequency | percent | frequency | percent |
| Taking on individuals without adequate qualifications | 406 | 45.2 | 119 | 13.2 | 525 | 58.4 |
| Taking on individuals without adequate psychic dispositions (stress resistance, for instance) | 319 | 35.5 | 42 | 4.7 | 361 | 40.2 |
| Taking on individuals without adequate qualification (e.g. people who do not know how to work with a computer) | 252 | 28.0 | 24 | 2.7 | 276 | 30.7 |
| Discriminating against older people | 181 | 20.1 | 13 | 1.4 | 194 | 21.5 |
| Taking on individuals without adequate personality dispositions (e.g. people prone to corruption) | 163 | 18.1 | 27 | 3.0 | 190 | 21.1 |
| Taking on individuals without adequate stamina | 124 | 13.8 | 4 | 0.4 | 128 | 14.2 |
| Discriminating against women | 56 | 6.2 | 4 | 0.4 | 60 | 6.6 |
| Discriminating against young people | 33 | 3.7 | 4 | 0.4 | 37 | 4.1 |

Note: The option “not indicated” has been omitted.

To conclude the above-mentioned remarks, one may postulate that manifold malpractices afflicting the recruitment processes in the Customs Service do exist. This is, at the same time, manifested as the generally negative opinion on the quality of human resources in the Customs Service. However, one must remember that the tendency is more indicative of high rank (management) officials than shop floor (“frontline”) employees. The difference is not deprived of significance as far as corruption risk is concerned: the “frontline” occupational roles—where the corruption risk is at its highest—are employed by personnel who are more suitable for the work, than the senior management.

A crucial problem, moreover, is taking on people without having adequate qualifications. It refers mostly to psychic dispositions and the ability to cope with modern technology. Some of such ill-qualified individuals are taken on because they are acquaintances or relatives of those Customs Service officials who may exert a substantial influence on the process of recruitment.

One has to remember that, although they may be seen as a valuable element of sociological diagnosis, respondents’ subjective perceptions by no means can be seen as the sole yardstick of human resources problems and drawbacks. Therefore, a postulate to increase the effectiveness of recruitment procedures has to be formulated. It refers mostly to recruitment related to management posts and other higher positions. Any improvement of that kind will surely have a positive influence on the fulfillment of organizational goals and may pave the way for the minimization of negative phenomena, including corruption.

6. Conclusions

One may discern shortcomings affecting the organizational structures—especially in their fundamental aspects of legal rules and regulations—that may actually increase corruption risk as measured for individual actions performed by the Customs Service officials. The necessity to interpret legal articles without an assistance of any solid interpretative tools is a factor increasing corruption risk among employees who face the necessity to take occupational decisions and actions single-handedly.

One may also conclude that corruption risk in the internal customs facilities (the case of Customs Office in Katowice) is higher. This is a result of structural and organizational weaknesses. It seems that the reason for the disproportion is caused by the disparities in care vested by the Polish regulatory bodies in observing the precision of legal regulations applied to borderline (more risk-prone by their very nature) and internal customs operations. The

most substantial areas of functioning, being at the same time most exposed to corruption risk, are effectively regulated. The remaining aspects of Customs Service are regulated less effectively.

An increase in the intensity of supervisory actions in risk-prone facilities should be postulated (e.g. borderline customs clearances). More effective supervisory procedures should be worked out. The mechanisms may decrease corruption risks. Furthermore, the implementation of efficient and effective motivational system is an important problem that calls for urgent solutions.

Anticorruption trainings and courses are assessed very positively. One may assume that anticorruption courses differ across a wide range of Customs Service facilities. Hence, taking care of the adjusting of courses to circumstances of a particular workplace as well as an observation of the quality of implemented courses are a must.

Drawbacks as far as employees' competences and occupational predispositions have been indicated. Diverse shortcomings of the recruitment processes in the Customs Service do exist. This is, at the same time, manifested as the generally critical opinion on the quality of human resources in the Customs Service. However, one must remember that the tendency is more indicative of high rank (management) officials than shop floor ("frontline") employees. Problems with human resources management are caused by taking on people without having adequate qualifications. It refers mostly to psychological dispositions and abilities to cope with modern technology (i.e. computer technology).

Chapter Four

The Customs Service Officers An Axiological Profile

1. Introduction

Highly significant as they may be, organizational and managerial systems or structures cannot be conceived as the sole determinants of an employee's behavior. Workplace perceptions, actions and assessments are always anchored in the formative legacy of axiological and symbolic resources of culture. These resources, to refer to Anthony Giddens's "theory of structuration," may be conceived in terms of rules rendering the reproduction of social practices across spatial and temporal dimensions of social life possible (Giddens 1984). The theory suggests that social structures consist of rules (the underlying grammar of social action) and resources (properties and assets that may empower individuals or social groupings) which are evident in individual and collative actions as conditionings of human agency.

Rules of culture—including regulations of axiological and normative descent—cannot possibly be conceived as self-evident and objective phenomena. These regulations remain hidden and implicit in human actions, language and discursive conventions, undertaken decisions and choices. Hence, by virtue of internalization, cultural rules may serve as best manifestations of latent (or virtual) character of social structures which, in fact, must be conceived as entities totally inscribed in the nature of social practice and knowledgeable, reflexive choice:

To say that structure is a "virtual order" of transformative relations means that social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have "structures" but rather exhibit "structural properties" and that structure exists, as time-space

presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable agents. (Giddens 1984, 17)

The previous chapter is devoted to a sociological analysis of clear-cut, management systems and solutions. This section, in turn, refers to processes of structural determination which exert influence in a less conspicuous way by means of subordinating human behavior to a determination that goes well beyond the rigid framework of managerial expertise or workplace organization. Hence, the chapter will contextualize corruption risks in a general sphere of cultural values and norms, the symbolic resources which give sense and orientation to individual actions and decisions taken both in private and occupational settings.

Since an individual may be conceived as a societal entity which is characterized by having his/her distinct social personality, one may represent them in many diversified ways. When surveying the Customs Service officials, we were, first and foremost, focused on those elements of social personality that are related to occupational roles and actions undertaken with the formative awareness of being exposed to diversified corruption risks. Hence, this chapter is concerned with social personality traits and other dimensions that characterize an individual from a perspective of socially accepted, as well as socially declared (desirable) values. Furthermore, since the Customs Service officers are public officials, the expressed attitudes, referring to diverse forms of civic engagement, will be taken into account. In this particular context, a sociologist is automatically in a position to ask questions concerning these life priorities which may be subjectively perceived as one's lifetime objectives. Likewise, we are also attentive to see how Customs Service employees are willing to perceive and assess their own civic engagement.

Although various aspects of social personality are very often cognitively dissected for purely scholarly reasons, one must remember that the notion stands for a certain integral totality, a system which exerts formative influence upon an individual's personal dispositions and the character of his or her activities in everyday life. Therefore, sociological reflections aim to construct a variety of social personality types.¹⁰ Although the type of data we have acquired is not sufficient enough to create a fully-fledged typology of social personalities, the results seem valuable enough to provide a sociological insight into the Customs Service officer's profile from a perspective that is not directly related to occupational roles, but may substantially affect the way of fulfilling them.

¹⁰ A seminal classification of social personality types was postulated by Florian Znaniecki who enumerated four dominant types of social personality: (1) the leisure man, (2) the working man, (3) the well-behaved man, (5) the deviant man (see Znaniecki 1974).

2. Value Orientations

Values may be considered as the cornerstone of societal existence understood both individually and collectively. Likewise, values are regarded in terms of motivational forces that pave the way for the willingness to undertake civic activities. Yet, at the same time, they may be perceived in terms of objectives to which social actions are directed. Needless to say, values constitute an indispensable element of human life.¹¹ Francis Fukuyama addresses the problem most firmly when he points towards the socially productive character of cultural values:

As people soon discovered, there were serious problems with a culture of unbridled individualism, where the breaking of rules becomes, in a sense, the only remaining rule. The first had to do with the fact that moral values and social rules are not simply arbitrary constraints on the individual choice; rather, they are the precondition for any type of cooperative enterprise. [...] Social virtues like honesty, reciprocity, and keeping commitments are not choiceworthy just as ethical values; they also have a tangible dollar value and help the groups who practice them achieve shared ends. (2000, 14)

We decided to investigate into respondents' value orientations by means of questionnaire questions that enabled them to indicate preferred values and, additionally, to extend their own lists of valued objectives by suggesting their own individual goals or personal aspirations. One must take notice that the respondents were in a position to choose more than one option, so the total figure (expressed as percentage) does not amount to 100% (table 25).

The data below quite straightforwardly prove that respondents' axiological choices are, beyond any doubt, mostly focused upon family-related concerns. From the perspective of choices made by the Customs Service officers, family is one of the most frequently indicated values, an objective assuming the principal position in the hierarchy of acknowledged and preferred values. The result is not surprising since family and all family-related considerations are, as a rule, attributed extraordinary significance by the majority of Poles from a vast array of social backgrounds.

The principal importance of family seems to be endowed with many connotations including family happiness, emotional safety, or decent conditions of material existence. Nowadays, social and cultural changes affecting Polish society very dramatically demonstrate the multifaceted cultural crisis that has been

¹¹ The contemporary sociology tends to see values in terms of powerful cultural forces which are responsible not only for maintaining social order (a regulatory function), but also for fostering economic growth and political modernization (cf. Harrison and Huntington 2001).

Table 25. The Customs Service officials’ axiological preferences

| Most important objectives and aspirations in one’s life | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Happy family life | 758 | 84.3 |
| A peace of mind | 378 | 42.0 |
| Fulfillment of one’s interests and talents | 323 | 35.9 |
| Interesting job | 291 | 32.4 |
| Friendship | 193 | 21.5 |
| Traveling | 178 | 19.8 |
| Fulfilling important moral ideals | 76 | 8.5 |
| Achieving social prestige | 73 | 8.1 |
| Wealth | 52 | 5.8 |
| Achieving high occupational standing | 44 | 4.9 |
| Achieving educational standing as high as possible | 28 | 3.1 |
| Socializing a lot | 23 | 2.6 |
| Achieving participation in culture as broad as possible | 16 | 1.8 |
| Power | 5 | 0.6 |
| Other objectives | 19 | 2.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 273.4 |

affecting families. One may, therefore, postulate that respondents’ axiological preferences could be interpreted in terms of searching for the original meaning of values that has been lost and, probably, betrayed by some of us. Accordingly, the obtained declarations may be seen as a voice of dissent against loud and media-mainstream tendencies towards the devaluation of the traditional family model and the dissemination of new cultural patterns chief among which is the acceptance of being “single.” The importance of family-related matters is also visible in the cases when respondents are willing to decide in favor of the option indicated as “other objectives.” Here, personal goals and aspirations are also perceived in the context of family-related considerations. This is especially true of such statements as: aiming towards financial stabilization, repaying mortgage loans, providing one’s family with decent life conditions and educational opportunities for children, care for other family members’ health.

The dominating position of family-related considerations in the hierarchy of acknowledged values is also manifested by the disproportion between the choice in question and the second value in the ranking; namely, “peace of mind.” As compared to family—whose primary importance is declared by more than 84% of respondents—the number of respondents choosing “peace of mind” has been cut in half, declining to “mere” 42%. At this point, one has to remember that peace of mind should be regarded as a specific existential value whose significance is, paradoxically enough, rooted in a degree of its absence. The work for

the Customs Service is furrowed with stress factors, and various perils and risks. Moreover, as the watchmen of a national culture of trust, the Customs Service officials constantly face the risk of betraying the values which they should protect in the first place. In this context, peace of mind may be conceived as getting free from the routine necessity of coping with stress associated with workplace roles. Needless to say, the value may be automatically related to leisure.

“Fulfillment of one’s interests and talents” (35.9%) and “interesting job” (32.4%) are the examples of values which were chosen with a similar degree of intensity. Therefore, one may purport to interpret this similarity by means of postulating that respondents’ interests and talents are probably liable to be fulfilled in the workplace environment of the Customs Service.

A relatively huge importance is attributed to friendship (21.5%) and travelling (19.8%). Friendship, when analyzed from a strictly sociological perspective, may be interpreted as an indicator of being oriented at the importance of small social groups. This, in turn, shows that respondents’ interest is vested in informal, agential and disinterested social ties which take place in the atmosphere of emotional closeness and in the cognitive milieu of shared perspectives, thoughts, experiences and evaluations. As opposed to being focused on family, which proves to be a historically well-entrenched phenomenon in Poland, the stress put on travelling seems to constitute a positive response to new types of lifestyles whose significant elements are related to a need for migration and a penchant for novelty. According to a well-known typology of social personality, a modern man can be seen as a “tourist” who travels around the world, observes it, consumes its products and, at the same time, does not bother to carry the burden of bygone experiences which, quite naturally, are reserved for natives (Bauman 1994). In this specific sense, the surveyed Customs Service officials exhibit certain traits of (post)modern personality.

Other values—through declared with a lesser degree of intensity—include “fulfilling important moral ideals” (8.5%) and “achieving social prestige” (8.1%). Even smaller significance is attributed to wealth (5.6%) and occupational status (4.9%). Likewise, achieving higher educational standing, participation in culture, and power are declared to have only marginal importance for the surveyed persons.

The Customs Service officials are aware of the fact that one must be characterized as possessing certain agential traits, such as competences, talents or endurance, to attain the declared objectives. The idea of agency is widely deployed in order to denote an individual whose mental, intellectual, social, and physical capacities are sufficient enough to exert a formative influence on the character of social life, including the shape of social structures and systems. In this way, human agency is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the process of morphogenesis which, as Margaret Archer puts it, suggests that social structures are dynamic entities in the process of becoming:

Hence the use of the term “morphogenesis” to describe the process of social structuring; “morpho” indicating shape, and “genesis” signalling that the shaping is the product of *social relations*. Thus “Morphogenesis” refers to those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system’s given form, state or structure. (1995, 166)

Almost 55% of respondents are willing to say that human agency can be regarded as a decisive factor in taking one’s life success into consideration (table 26). Consequently, one may predict that these respondents are willing to reject a pre-modern attitude of fatalism according to which a person has no significant impact on the social reality and is in a position to accept the pre-established systems and structures in society.

Table 26. The determinants of success in one’s life

| Determinants | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| Success in life does not depend on me. It depends on factors which are beyond my control | 190 | 21.1 |
| Success in life depends mainly on me | 490 | 54.5 |
| It is difficult to say | 165 | 18.4 |
| Not indicated | 35 | 3.9 |
| Incorrect answer | 19 | 2.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

However, at the same time, the Customs Service representatives tend to share a realistic view as far as the evaluation of their potentialities is concerned. This is how one may interpret the declarations postulating that one’s life success may depend mostly on factors which are beyond the person’s control and, consequently, agency.

3. Attitudes Towards Civic Activism

Both agency and morphogenesis are strongly related to civic activism. In this context, the willingness to invest one’s qualifications and resources in order to tend public goods and take part in collective enterprises may be seen as a distinct type of morphogenesis-prone behavior. Interestingly enough, Alexis de Tocqueville was among the first scholars to understand the productive, inherently morphogenetic character of civic activism:

In their political associations the Americans, of all conditions, minds, and ages, daily acquire a general taste for association and grow accustomed to the

use of it. There they meet together in large numbers, they converse, they listen to one another, and they are mutually stimulated to all sorts of undertakings. They afterwards transfer to civil life the notions they have thus acquired and make them subservient to a thousand purposes. (1969, Book II, ch. 8)

Taking the importance of civic activism into consideration, one faces a necessity to expand the Customs Service officer's axiological profile by referring to attitudes related to various forms of taking part in public life. At this point, one has to remember that the declared strength of value orientations towards family (and other forms of small social groups) is not necessarily contradictory with reference to the attitudes of civic activity which, uniformly, are dedicated to more general, socially all-encompassing matters.¹² Yet, on the other hand, the focus on small structures in society (family, friendship, etc.) may be also conducive to vesting interest in civic problems which, in this particular case, are perceived as being related exclusively to one's personal life experiences focused upon family, groups of friend or one's closest neighborhood.

Table 27. Positive declarations referring to the statement: "an average person should take part in civic activities on behalf of his/her local community"

| Respondents' declarations | Number | Percent |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| Not indicated | 152 | 16.9 |
| I strongly agree | 175 | 19.5 |
| I agree | 350 | 38.9 |
| I disagree | 60 | 6.7 |
| I strongly disagree | 22 | 2.4 |
| I don't know | 103 | 11.5 |
| Incorrect answer | 37 | 4.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The breakdown of provided answers indicates that respondents are characterized by the existence of well-entrenched civic attitudes. Almost 60% are willing to say that a person should take part in civic activities on behalf of his/her local community. Moreover, one-fifth claim that the matter is of fundamental importance ("I strongly agree"). One may, therefore, come to a conclusion that the imperative of civic activity is well inscribed into the Customs Service official's social personality. Additionally, our interpretation is rendered plausible by the fact that a relatively small number of respondents (2.4%) tend to show a decisively negative attitude towards forms of civic activities.

¹² In this context, one has to refer to a distinction between family- and kinship-related "strong social ties" and the "weak social ties" that bind individuals within larger social structures (communities, states) (see Granovetter 1983: 1; 1973:78).

When delineating an axiological portrait of the Customs Service representative, one must not forget to refer to moderately negative attitudes (“I disagree”) towards civic service and civic activities (6.7%). This is also true of the instances in which no conclusive declarations were provided (“undecided”—11.5%). If the two options are taken together, one may find that more than 18% of respondents are willing to keep a safe distance from presenting their attitudes towards civic activities. This particular axiological tendency is even more visible when one decides to analyze respondents’ views on the impact of their individual actions on the ultimate shape of social life in general (table 28).

Table 28. Affirmative answers provided to the statement: “since one does not have any influence whatsoever on social matters, an average person should mind their own business and do what one is supposed to do”

| Respondents’ answers | Number | Percent |
|----------------------|--------|---------|
| Not indicated | 155 | 17.2 |
| I strongly agree | 217 | 24.1 |
| I agree | 256 | 28.5 |
| I disagree | 127 | 14.1 |
| I strongly disagree | 61 | 6.8 |
| I don’t know | 41 | 4.6 |
| Incorrect answer | 42 | 4.7 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

More than half of the surveyed population are willing to accept a viewpoint suggesting that an ordinary person has no influence whatsoever on the shape of social matters, and hence should take care mostly of their own interest and keep on doing what one is supposed to do. This point of view is shared by 52.6% of the Customs Service officials (24.1% agree to it in the most decisive form).

In this case, it seems that the statement “do what one is supposed to do” is responsible for the obtained breakdown of answers. This rule, as far as the legacy of Polish cultural tradition is concerned, may be interpreted as the acceptance of the *status quo* and disapproval of any initiatives that may possibly lead to changing it. Hence, one may conclude that the social environment of the Customs Service may be best characterized by the existence of ritual conformity to the existing forms of social existence, which, as a result, may lead to a failure of any initiatives focusing on the implementation of structural or organizational change.

However, on the other hand, 20% of officials do not seem to accept—either decisively or conditionally—the attitude leading to a conclusion that minding one’s own business is a constructive solution because there is no evidence

suggesting that social activism is effective. These people may be motivated by a perception of social life as a kind of process in which every individual may occupy a relevant position and has certain tasks to perform. In this sense, an individual is not only passively created by social and cultural forces but, at the same time, is able to exert a considerable amount of pressure on the direction of social life and, by means of assuming various social roles and positions, may actively co-construct it.

4. Conclusions

The dominant traits of the Customs Service officials' social personalities are manifested by the orientation towards basic (and traditional in a certain sense) existential values which oscillate around the perspective of having a happy, tranquil life in the company of family members and friends, which renders the actualization of one's interest and talents at work possible. This axiological profile should be complemented by aspirations related to the achievement of high moral ideals and openness to new experiences as symbolized by traveling. Respondents are also willing to indicate the values of wealth, socializing, education and participation in cultural life.

The Customs Service official's sociological profile seems also to be built upon the rule of agency, according to which success in one's life is perceived as a result of one's activity, competences, talents, innovativeness or endurance. In this sense, external, structural determinants, such as social networks, are merely seen as second-order determinants taking place in the background of individual actions.

The Customs Service officers tend to declare positive attitudes towards civic activities but, at the same time, are also willing to show distance as to the acceptance of certain pro-civic attitudes. Respondents prefer domestication in the world of closest family and friends, which is characterized by their penchant for emotional security, community of thoughts, as well as existential stabilization and predictability of the future. Furthermore, the majority of respondents declare a belief that social processes and social structures may be constructively conditioned by human activity.

Chapter Five

Corruption Risks and the Informal Aspects of Organizational Culture

1. Introduction

An institutional aspect is indicative of the functioning of every social organization. It means that organizations are formalized institutions in which internal structures, personnel's roles, as well as channels of interpersonal communication are constituted by means of acts, articles, bylaws or other kinds of formal documentation. Yet, it must not be forgotten that in every organization, even in the most formalized one, there are also informal structures and communication rules as well as casual prescriptions according to which social roles should be fulfilled. As opposed to formal regulations—which are characterized by a significant degree of impersonality—informal organizational structures remain personal in such a way as to evoke an attitude of “interested kindness” in cases where the circumstances of operation are most extreme and negative.

Social organizations and other forms of societal cooperation are based upon the foundations of social trust. Trust, as Piotr Sztompka puts it, is implicit in all social actions undertaken with a hope that the Other's response will be beneficial for the entrusting party. Hence, the term may be seen as a form of “bet about the future contingent actions of others” (1999, 25). In other words, trusting constitutes a form of personal strategy undertaken against uncertainty or risk, which is deployed when the Other's actions are perceived as unpredictable or threatening. A similar perspective is assumed by Niklas Luhmann who holds that “trust is a solution for specific problems of risk” (1988, 95).

As a matter of fact, trust, as Sztompka sees it, is a multifaceted phenomenon which manifests itself as the following types of personal expectations:

- **Efficiency expectations.** These anticipations are related to instrumental qualities of undertaken actions. They indicate that an individual is predisposed to

expect that other people's actions will be undertaken routinely, predictably and with regard to norms of instrumental rationality;

- **Axiological expectations.** In this case trust is based upon an expectation that a partner to the interaction will be willing to act according to cultural norms of responsibility, fairness, justice, and morality;
- **Protective expectations.** In this context, trusting is grounded in a prediction that other individuals will be keen on taking disinterested care of us. In this particular context, trusting is founded upon norms of altruism, reciprocity and mutual aid (2007, 311).

The category of trust may be related to interpersonal relations, social groups, social organizations, and—when the most general perspective is acquired—to whole societies. From the latter perspective, one may refer to a notion of the “culture of trust.” The term is considered as a climate of generalized trust permeating social groupings and multilateral normative regulations based upon the critical assumption that individuals are in a position to act according to the prescribed role definitions, to behave in ways that will be beneficial for their trustees and, last but not least, to be willing to comply with the norms of loyalty and solidarity with reference to one another (Sztompka 1999, 99–101). In short, the notion of trust culture may be seen as “a system of rules—norms and values—regulating granting trust and meeting, returning, and reciprocating trust” (1999, 99).

Trust is not only a multidimensional phenomenon. It also varies across a wide range of social and cultural contexts. Sztompka enumerates the following types of trust:

- **systemic trust** which is based upon the effectiveness, reliability, and fairness of a socio-political system. This form of trusting is especially conducive to the development of “ontological security”¹³;
- **institutional trust** whose significance gestures to formal organizations and, more indirectly, to myriads of individuals fulfilling diversified roles in these systems (the Customs Service certainly fits into this specific interpretative context);
- **positional trust** which is directed *a priori* towards anyone who occupies a social role requiring being trustworthy (the Customs Service officials can be categorized here);
- **commercial trust** which is inherent in all business transactions and, more specifically, in all decisions concerning acts of purchase, especially those taken with a sense that reliability, honesty of the sellers is a matter of prime importance;
- **technological trust** conceived as an expression or belief in reliability of socio-technical systems. This is particularly significant in contemporary societies in which people are expected to put trust in expert systems which,

¹³ The notion of “ontological security” is often evoked in this context (cf. Giddens 1991, 36).

generally speaking remain obscure for the majority of laypersons. Technological trust, when perceived from a yet another angle, is a belief in capabilities and knowledge that characterize constructors and operators of socio-technical systems;

- **personal trust** which is vested in individuals who are well-known to us. These people may simultaneously fulfill roles for a larger organization. If this is the case, personal trust is automatically related to the institution in question.

Trusting is a form of personal engagement and belief which functions as means facilitating risk taking, especially when it is related to irreversible decisions made under the conditions of uncertainty. In this context, both trust and distrust may be conceived as specific “bets” held against the uncertain future. The term “bet” assumes a crucial role in this particular understanding. The notion does not only refer to a contemplative expectation, hope on the level of human cognition. Betting on something requires action, engagement enabling to take a risky decision that cannot possibly be undone:

But the anticipatory belief is not sufficient to speak of there being trust. Trust is more than just contemplative consideration of future possibilities. We must also face the future actively, by committing ourselves to action with at least partly uncertain or uncontrollable consequences. Thus, second, trust involves commitment through action, or—metaphorically speaking—placing a bet. (Sztompka 1999, 26)

Therefore, pushing the argument further on, one may say that vesting trust in judges, prosecutors, colleagues, politicians, the Customs Service officials, co-workers, etc. is conducive to hoping that their occupational duties will be fulfilled consistently and wholeheartedly. At the same time, their actions will be perceived as undertaken with compliance to normative regulations and reliability standards regardless of facing favorable or unfavorable situational and personal circumstances. It is also a belief that individuals, to refer to the occupational context of the Customs Service, will not stay in a position to seek for “interested sympathy” among the personnel.

2. Trust and Distrust in Public Life

The first issue to discuss is a characteristic of the culture of trust as a sociological feature typical of Polish society. In this specific sense, the culture of trust should be conceived as the most general context in which all formal and informal orga-

nizations, as well as a plethora of individual ways of taking part in social life may be inscribed. Furthermore, it functions to create an axiological framework which is indispensable for institutions and organizations that—apart from civic, political or economic activities—are obliged to fulfill expectations related to occupational ethos or other moral considerations of a more informal character. In this particular context, one may refer to the structures of the Customs Service.

The table below consists of answers provided for a question asked with reference to respondents' perceptions of the level of interpersonal trust in Polish society. First of all, it seems very interesting to indicate that, as a matter of fact, a limited number of respondents (2.2%) is sure that people in Poland are trustworthy. Needless to say, an observation like this must be automatically subsumed within a huge number of critical voices concerning the wavering condition of interpersonal trust in Poland (Sztompka 2004). Yet, one has to remember that in this particular case the assessments may be related *a priori* to the character of occupational roles typical of the Customs Service.

Table 29. Affirmative answers provided to the statement that people in Poland are generally trustworthy

| Respondents' answers | Number | Percent |
|----------------------|--------|---------|
| Agree strongly | 20 | 2.2 |
| Agree moderately | 398 | 44.3 |
| Disagree moderately | 257 | 28.6 |
| Disagree strongly | 78 | 8.7 |
| Undecided | 137 | 15.2 |
| Not indicated | 8 | 0.9 |
| Incorrect answer | 1 | 0.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

Although the number of respondents who are willing to describe the condition of Polish culture of trust in positive terms is relatively high (44.3%), their views seem to be characterized by a great deal of disbelief as to the certainty of expressed declarations. The wavering character of those declarations is best rendered by the number of respondents who choose the option "agree moderately." In the latter case, trust is granted conditionally with reference to certain circumstances which are inspired by diversified factors (for instance, by personality traits constitutive for the emergence of personal trust). This line of interpretation is reinforced by an observation stressing that a considerable number of respondents have problems with providing a relevant answer to the question (undecided—15.2%). Concurrently, a very large group of Customs Service officials tend to declare that people in Poland cannot be trusted (more than 37%). This view is expressed in definite terms by 9% of them. Respondents—as far

as their views on the culture of trust in Poland are concerned—do not differ from other occupational categories or social groupings.

Let us have a closer look at the disproportion taking place between a very limited group of respondents who claim that people in Poland can be trusted upon (2.2%) and a much more numerous category which is of a different opinion (8.7%). The erosion of reservoirs of interpersonal and institutional trust is one of the most significant social problem in Poland nowadays. It is, historically speaking, a negative legacy of communism. It seems, moreover, that the typically Polish problem with the accumulation of social trust may be seen in the context of disillusionment with the nature and direction of social changes that took place after 1989 (Sztompka 2004).

The issue of trust culture may also be discussed with reference to respondents' observations and assessments referring to the Polish judicial system. Legal institutions—apart from being responsible for the normative regulation of social life—must be perceived as reliable and efficient enough to ensure public trust with respect to fairness and righteousness of its regulations and the impersonal character of judging. This is especially applicable to judicature, law enforcement institutions, the Bar, and other institutions responsible for legal and normative regulation.

Table 30 refers to respondents' assessments of the Polish judicial system with special reference to judicature and prosecution. Both trust and distrust vested in such institutions may be conceived as important indicators referring to the overall condition of trust culture in Poland.

Table 30. Trust vested with reference to the Polish legal system (prosecution, judicature)

| Degrees of trust vested in the Polish law system | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| Not indicated | 9 | 1.0 |
| A great deal of trust | 7 | 0.8 |
| Much trust | 64 | 7.1 |
| Moderate trust | 378 | 42.1 |
| Little trust | 271 | 30.1 |
| Very little trust | 170 | 18.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

By withdrawing their trust, respondents are characterized by possessing negative attitudes towards the Polish legal system. The validity of this particular interpretation may be reinforced by an assumption that institutions of the legal system should be univocally regarded as reliable and effective. The standards of social expectations, in this case, are very high, but this is typical of the nature of the legal system whose efficiency is necessitated by granting general and complete trust.

Respondents' declarations, which state that legal institutions are trusted moderately (42.1%), little (30.1%) and very little (18.9%), are very indicative of a situation that can be defined as a crisis of trust towards the legal system in Poland. Moreover, it has to be remarked that such attitudes are displayed by state officials whose professional qualifications and knowledge are sufficient enough to provide accurate estimations and assessments of the Polish legal system with respect to the totality of its aspects and dimensions, and especially in the areas that are very responsive to any attempts to violate the norms of the culture of trust. We must also mention, to conclude this part of the argument, that merely 7 respondents (0.8%) are willing to declare that they vest a great deal of trust towards the legal system and 64 of them (7.1%) vest much trust in it.

Another dimension of Polish culture of trust is confidence vested in politicians. It seems that, in principle, politicians are most predisposed to create national cultures of trust because they are responsible for the delineation of legal norms, providing interpretation procedures, and indicating proper standards of fulfilling public functions (table 31).

Table 31. Trust vested in politicians

| Degrees of trust vested in politicians | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Not indicated | 8 | 0.9 |
| A great deal of trust | 3 | 0.3 |
| Much trust | 11 | 1.2 |
| Moderate trust | 154 | 17.1 |
| Little trust | 307 | 34.2 |
| Very little trust | 416 | 46.3 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

As opposed to the legal system, whose functioning is mostly awarded with moderate or little trust, politicians are considered far less trustworthy. More than 46% believe that people from the political scene are trustworthy in a very little degree. At the same time, more than one-third of respondents wish to declare moderate trust and 17.1% vest little trust in politicians. Likewise, the amount of the Customs Service officials who grant considerable trust in politicians is "trace": only 3 respondents (0.3%) think so and 11 persons (1.2%) are willing to vest much trust in the representatives of the political class. One may observe, therefore, that the results show the degree to which the Polish political class is alienated from the mainstream of society. Similarly, the observations point to the processes of decomposition affecting public life in Poland.

3. Coworkers' Groups and the Informal Dimensions of the Culture of Trust

The problem of trust culture—when analyzed from a perspective of corruption risks—may also be discussed and observed in the context of employees' willingness to seek for their colleagues' assistance in case of trouble at a workplace. A workplace environment creates a specific type of informal climate in which occupational roles are being fulfilled. It may be conceived as a distinct type of organizational milieu in which informal behavioral rules are being created, together with casual interpretations of already existing regulations or by-laws. In a very similar fashion Geert Hofstede tends to define organizational culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others” (2011, 3).

Informal organizational cultures are also a sufficient but not necessary condition to foster informal social bonds which, in turn, may legitimize assessment standards typical of individuals in their day-to-day actions. Hence, the problem of corruption risk was surveyed with reference to informal bonds among co-workers.

Table 32. Corruption-related problems as a theme of employees' everyday conversations

| Is corruption a theme of everyday conversations | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| “I agree strongly. Corruption is a serious social problem which affects our profession as well” | 21 | 2.3 |
| “I agree moderately. After all, corruption is a serious social issue” | 91 | 10.1 |
| “I disagree moderately. There are a plenty of more important issues to discuss” | 576 | 64.1 |
| “I disagree strongly. Corruption is not a serious social issue and it basically doesn't affect us” | 199 | 22.2 |
| Not indicated | 12 | 1.3 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

Taking a glance at the table is sufficient enough to state that the problem of corruption is certainly not one of the most important issues that crop out during informal conversations. One may even conclude that respondents are willing to turn a blind eye on the problem. The officials are willing to state that there are a lot of problems endowed with bigger significance than corruption, which is not to be discussed upon (64.1%). More than one-fifth of respondents declare that corruption does not significantly affect the workplace, which, in principle, should explain that fact that the issue is not a leading topic of day-to-day conversations. At the same time, more than 12% claim that corrup-

tion is an important social problem and an issue that affects their own workplace, so it is a vivid topic of everyday conversations.

The problems of corruption, when perceived in terms of threats destabilizing trust cultures, are typical of many occupational settings. The Customs Service is not an exception to this rule. Although this chapter does not wish to investigate into the underpinnings of the problem or its scale and consequences, the data below relate to respondents' opinions on "whistleblowers"; that is, individuals who detect corruption and signal it to the relevant authorities. Needless to say, the obtained information is extremely interesting from a perspective of psycho-social mechanisms operative in the occupational environment.

Table 33. The assessments of coworkers' attitudes towards individuals who aim to uncover corruption by means of informing the relevant authorities

| Coworkers' attitudes | Number | Prcent |
|--|--------|--------|
| The individuals' actions face common approval and respect | 91 | 10.1 |
| The individuals are looked up to for their bravery | 122 | 13.6 |
| The individuals' actions are considered as unintelligible | 80 | 8.9 |
| The individuals face social disapproval because "denunciation" is foreign to our tradition | 179 | 19.9 |
| The individuals face harsh disapproval and, in extreme cases, social marginalization | 60 | 6.7 |
| Customs Service officials are indifferent to it | 58 | 6.5 |
| Undecided | 285 | 31.6 |
| Not indicated | 16 | 1.8 |
| Incorrect answer | 8 | 0.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

More than 38% declare a peculiar indifference or distance to the problem either by acknowledging that it is hard to have a precise view on the matter (31.6%) or stating quite explicitly that the Customs Service officials are rather indifferent to the problem of corruption (6.5%). It seems, therefore, that the aforementioned attitudes may be conceived in terms of important indicators that help us to visualize the kind of atmosphere which is typical of the Customs Service nowadays.

Individuals who have decided to act as "whistleblowers" may face social disapproval and marginalization (in the most extreme cases). Almost one-fifth of the respondents claim that informing the relevant authorities about corruption may be considered as an act of denunciation. At this point, one has to remember that denunciation is burdened with stigmatizing character in Polish culture and the procedure is generally alien to its traditional ethos. Moreover, it is worth noticing that a certain semantic shift concerning respondents' assess-

ments of corruption have taken place. The mechanism generates a tendency to mistakenly uphold that "providing information" can be seen in terms of "denunciation." This semantic subterfuge is sufficient enough to apply negative moral assessments with reference to individuals who inform the relevant authorities about corruption, hoping that their actions will result in the betterment of the organizational trust culture. Hence, it is easily discernible that the stigma of "denunciation" makes an individual excluded from the informal communication structures and social roles. It is, to put it otherwise, tantamount to ostracizing the individuals in question.

Almost 25% of the respondents declare that an attempt to spot corruption and report it to the relevant authorities is positively valued by coworkers who see it as an example of bravery or dissension with reference to the already existing structures of corrupt exchanges. Hence, when analyzing the data from the table above, one should focus mainly on answers which emphasize that the readiness to provide information on corrupt exchanges may be seen as a form of bravery (13.6% of declarations). It seems that the attitudes of being vigilant to corruption should be conceived as a norm in the realities of Customs Service. So, considering them as a kind of exceptional bravery is an important indicator showing the true nature and condition the culture of trust as it is typical of the Customs Service.

The aforementioned ethical considerations cannot obviously be limited to the reality of the Customs Service. Hence, we decided to investigate into the Customs Service officials' awareness of the fact how people in general tend to perceive individuals who are ready to report about corruption to authorities (table 34).

Table 34. General attitudes towards individuals who aim to uncover corruption by means of informing the relevant authorities

| General attitudes towards individuals who aim to undercover corruption | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| The individuals' actions face common approval and respect | 80 | 8.9 |
| The individuals are looked up to for their bravery | 136 | 15.1 |
| The individuals' actions are considered as unintelligible | 87 | 9.7 |
| The individuals face social disapproval because "denunciation" is foreign to our tradition | 202 | 22.5 |
| The individuals face harsh disapproval and, in extreme cases, social marginalization | 32 | 3.6 |
| Customs Service officials are indifferent to it | 144 | 16.0 |
| Undecided | 195 | 21.6 |
| Not indicated | 17 | 1.9 |
| Incorrect answer | 6 | 0.7 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The first thing to take notice of is a striking similarity between the assessments of coworkers' views and the general public's attitudes on the matter. A more detailed comparison of the relevant data is presented in table 35.

Table 35. The comparison of attitudes towards reporting on corruption that are typical of the Customs Service employees and the general public in Poland

| Attitudes towards reporting on corruption | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| The individuals' actions face common approval and respect | 91 | 10.1 |
| The individuals are looked up to for their bravery | 122 | 13.6 |
| The individuals' actions are considered as unintelligible | 80 | 8.9 |
| The individuals face social disapproval because "denunciation" is foreign to our tradition | 179 | 19.9 |
| The individuals face harsh disapproval and, in extreme cases, social marginalization | 60 | 6.7 |
| Customs Service officials are indifferent to it | 58 | 6.5 |
| Undecided | 284 | 31.6 |
| Not indicated | 16 | 1.8 |
| Incorrect answer | 8 | 0.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

The comparison shows that the structure of provided answers becomes very similar when respondents assess their coworkers' opinions and views expressed by the general public. Although the differences seem insignificant at first glance, it seems interesting to take a closer look on the answers provided with respect to the enumerated questions:

- the Customs Service officials think that the level of disapproval against reporting on corruption is more intense when the general public is concerned, rather than in their own occupational context. In other words, the stigma of a denunciator is typical of both reference contexts, but in the case of the Customs Service it is less significant;
- the Customs Service may be characterized by a stronger disapproval of "whistleblowers" (as compared to the general public). Additionally, in the earlier context, the attitude is almost automatically converted into the readiness to sentence a whistleblower to environmental marginalization. It means, to put it otherwise, that the Customs Service officials face a greater amount of difficulties as to their willingness to report on corruption. The risk of occupational marginalization is also higher;
- when the two types of answers are compared—namely "undecided" and "people who are indifferent to the problem"—it becomes apparent that the Customs Service employees are more hesitant when it comes to formulating opinions on their own occupational environment. In the officials' view, the

general public is significantly more indifferent (16%) to the risk of reporting corruption, than the employees themselves (6.5%);

- the employees are in a position to claim that reporting on corruption is more socially approved in their own occupational setting than beyond it. The general public, in turn, is more predisposed to see it in terms of bravery or courage. In contrast, the Customs Service officials are more willing to see the activities as natural consequences of occupational duties.

One may conclude that a decision concerning reporting on corrupt incidents belongs to the category of difficult situations. Hence, it seems interesting to observe how respondents cope with difficult situations in their work. Taking tough decisions is always related to an activity of risk taking which, as Mary Douglas puts it, cannot be seen as an entirely individual matter (1994). Risk, and a plethora of other difficult situations, is to be faced collectively, with support and assistance from other people.

Table 36. Coping with difficult situations

| Coping with difficult situations | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| I ask my colleagues for a piece of advice | 191 | 21.2 |
| I ask my superiors for a piece of advice | 498 | 55.5 |
| I take decisions single-handedly | 164 | 18.2 |
| Not indicated | 20 | 2.2 |
| Incorrect answer | 26 | 2.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 899 | 100.0 |

First and foremost, one has to take into consideration the role of supervisors at the workplace. More than 65% of the respondents indicate that the supervisors can be seen in terms of acceptable and relevant parties to be taken into account when difficult situations are faced. Thus, such answers may be regarded as signs of trust vested in respondents' superiors. More than one-fifth turn to coworkers for help and a piece of advice and 18% are willing to find solutions by themselves, with no interpersonal assistance. The number of officials who consider supervisors as legitimate sources of advice or assistance may be regarded as satisfying, especially when one considers the systemic and structural characteristics of the Customs Service which, after all, is an overtly hierarchical organization. On the contrary, attitudes of self-reliance expressed by those respondents who declare finding solutions by themselves can be seen as signs of erosion affecting the foundation of the organizational culture of trust.

4. Conclusions

The Customs Service officials are willing to ascribe low level of trust to Polish society considered as a whole. Their opinions gesture towards the existence of a negative cultural context (or climate) in which their work may be placed.

Respondents work in an organization which is particularly susceptible to the disintegration of norms and values indicative the culture of trust. At the same time, they are endowed with knowledge and qualifications which are indispensable as far as the normative assessment the Polish legal system is concerned. The employees' opinions, however, tend to indicate distrust with reference to the system. Hence, the expressed attitudes may be analyzed in the context of a moral crisis affecting the institutional systems of law.

Respondents are extremely critical about representatives of the political spheres which seem to be stigmatized as a form of "culture of distrust." In this way, the crisis of systemic trust is being emphasized.

The Customs Service officials tend to be cautious as far as making assessments of their workplace is concerned. Corruption may be conceived as an extreme form culture of distrust. Yet, merely more than 10% of respondents tend to focus on the societal consequences of corruption (also with reference to their own workplace). Simultaneously, 86% tend to downplay the problem.

Respondents show distance with reference to attempts to have corruption undisclosed. Likewise, they express disapproval towards those individuals who have decided to report on corruption. In the latter context, the stigmatizing label of "denunciation" is applied almost automatically. Nearly one-fourth express contradictory views on the matter and decide to perceive reporting on corruption as an act of bravery or courage.

More than half of the respondents claim that they would ask their superiors for help if difficult situations at the workplace occurred. The rest are more willing to vest trust in their coworkers or their own abilities to cope with difficulties. When the hierarchical nature of the Customs Service is taken into account, the result may be regarded as an expression of efficiency and a sign of a relatively healthy condition culture of trust in this area of functioning.

The Customs Service officials are not the only occupational category which expresses critical or negative views on the condition of the culture of trust in Poland. Similar attitudes are easily found in a plethora of social groupings. Yet, in this particular case the expressed attitudes seem to be endowed with particular significance. After all, respondents are co-creators of the system whose role is to secure social order and the societal reservoirs of trust vested in state institutions. In the case of the Customs Service, the erosion of trust may lead to the emergence of culture of distrust, which is indicative of the civilizational crisis that is currently faced by Polish institutions and society. Re-

spendents are more willing to assume a critical outlook on social institutions situated beyond their own organization. At the same time, they tend to be cautious when it comes to elaborating on the conditions of the Customs Service. Likewise, incidents of corruption are perceived as insignificant and marginal events whose importance is dwarfed by other problems affecting this occupational environment.

Chapter Six

Corruption in the Perceptions of the Customs Service Officers

1. Introduction

Corruption affecting the public sector is one of those pathological phenomena whose negative consequences are socially widespread and objectively measurable. One may say that the problem is inherent in all spheres of public activity, including such crucial areas as federal, regional and grass-roots policymaking, or domestic and foreign security (armed forces).¹⁴ Furthermore, social costs of corruption are reflected by objective macroeconomic indicators showing the accelerating intensity with which the sphere of black economy is spreading out. The process, in turn, paves the way for the erosion of public finances, affecting especially this part of budget which is accumulated by means of collecting taxes, excises or tariffs. It is no wonder that corruption has become an object of in-depth sociological analyses aiming to explore the problem and estimate its consequences with reference to politics and economy. This is, for instance, typical of the *Corruption Perceptions Index* which is published by Transparency International. In 2010, the organization placed Poland on the 21st rank among 30 countries from the European Union and Western Europe. At the same time, it was the 41st rank among 178 countries worldwide.¹⁵

¹⁴ When perceived from a strictly sociological point of view, corruption is a kind of social pathology which may be characterized by its own internal dynamics of growth rendering transgressing institutional, cultural or mental boundaries possible (cf. Jarosz 2004, 202).

¹⁵ The quoted ranking awarded Poland with the total grade of 5.3 which was slightly better than the previous estimation according to which the grade was 5.0. Simultaneously, the grade 5.3 meant a tremendous betterment with reference to year 2006 when Poland got the worst grade of all EC countries, that is 3.6 (see *Corruption Perceptions Index 2010*). <http://www.transparency.org>.

The *Corruption Perceptions Index* is a methodologically complex survey which combines questionnaire-based research and analyses made by experts in the field. This complexity renders its objectivity and functionality a tool to be used mainly on the economic arena in which it can be deployed in order to rationalize investments or policymaking. From a perspective of sociological insights into corruption-related behavior, an analysis concerned with perceptions and social representations of the problem seems to be more significant. In this latter case, one deals with subjective (or inter-subjective) representations typical of commonsensical, layperson's knowledge on the magnitude of corruption risk and the nature of it.

The awareness of corruption-related problems in the Polish society has been a subject of many analyses conducted after the political transformation in 1989. The table below presents a historical account on the changeable character of social awareness of corruption from 1991 up to 2010.

Table 37. The social awareness of corruption in Poland (expressed as percentage) (see Kowalczyk 2010)

| Year | Do you think that corruption in Poland is a small or a big problem? Respondents' choices (%) | |
|-----------|---|----------------------|
| | it's a big problem | it's a small problem |
| VII 1991 | 71 | 17 |
| II 1992 | 86 | 9 |
| VII 2000 | 86 | 6 |
| VIII 2001 | 93 | 3 |
| II 2003 | 91 | 2 |
| XII 2003 | 90 | 3 |
| V 2004 | 95 | 1 |
| XII 2005 | 93 | 2 |
| II 2006 | 93 | 2 |
| IV 2009 | 89 | 6 |
| IV 2010 | 87 | 8 |

Sociological studies indicate a relatively stable tendency to perceive corruption as a vital social problem. The table shows that since 1991 the majority of respondents have tended to perceive corruption as a serious social threat, affecting many areas of social, political and economic life. The overwhelming majority of Polish citizens (the relative number varies from 71% up to 95% depending on the year of surveying) saw corruption in terms of a considerable social problem. Moreover, its gravity was perceived to have been so significant that it seems plausible enough to refer to the term "corruption culture" (Kubiak 2001) which indicates not only the ubiquitous character of the phenomenon,

but also the generalized inability to cope with it and the existence of social acceptance with reference to it.

The aim of this chapter is to delineate a sociological representation of the corruption-related problems as they tend to manifest themselves in the consciousness of officers employed by the Customs Service of Poland. In this sense, the research will focus on officers' perceptions and opinions concerning the magnitude of corruption-related problems, moral evaluation of active and passive corrupt exchanges, as well as their assessments of anti-corruption solutions implemented by the Customs authorities. At the same time, the chapter constitutes an attempt to explore the process through which norms and values of "corruption culture" may potentially seep into the reality of the Customs Service.

2. The Social Perception of Corruption

The quoted research into the perception of corruption in Poland was based upon a nationwide survey with no particular differentiation between social or occupational sub-categories. One may, therefore, predict that corruption-related perceptions in such a wide context are mainly embedded in mass media representations, not necessarily in real-life experiences or observations (Kubiak 2008). Although it seems that perceiving corruption in Poland as a typically mass-media construct is a gross simplification, one may assume that for a majority of the Polish population the problem is not a chief issue in the stream of real-life experiences. For the sake of methodological clarity, one may therefore assume that corruption may function as a mass media narrative whose experiencing is mediated by the cultural logic of media industry according to which the discourse of danger is much more valuable than coverage providing neutral information on day-to-day activities.¹⁶

In the context of the Customs Service of Poland, corruption threats are implicit in the character of work and they may exert real influence on officers' professional careers and social statuses (Mosiej 2007). Hence, it seems that the social perception of corruption is—in this particular case—a relevant indicator representing the structure of real-life experiences, rather than the scope of mass media constructs and discourses.¹⁷ In this sense, corruption perceptions are

¹⁶ As far as danger and risk perceptions are concerned, the impact of mass media is elaborated upon by the "Social Amplification of Risk Framework" (see Pidgeon, Kasperson, and Slovic 2003).

¹⁷ Contemporary social and cultural theory is very often furrowed with a sense of media distrust postulating that mass media are responsible for the creation of illusory network of ideologies and discourses fostering the all-pervading aura of hyperreality (see especially Baudrillard 1994).

a consequence of direct, real-life experience and are inscribed into a plethora of considerations referring to subjective judgments that officers make in order to evaluate the character of their work. The table below presents officers' opinions concerning the magnitude of corruption in Poland.

Table 38. The Customs Service Officers' opinions concerning the magnitude of corruption in Poland (expressed as percentage)

| Opinions on corruption | Customs Chambers | | | Average |
|---|------------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| "Corruption is one of the most important problems in Poland" | 11.6 | 7.7 | 10.8 | 10.0 |
| "Corruption is an important issue, but there are more significant ones" | 46.5 | 40.7 | 43.0 | 42.8 |
| "The corruption problem does exist, but it has been blown out of proportions" | 14.1 | 23.1 | 20.4 | 19.4 |
| "The scale of corruption in Poland is similar to other EC countries" | 27.8 | 28.2 | 25.8 | 26.8 |
| "There is no corruption problem in Poland" | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.1 |

A quick glance at table 38 is sufficient enough to discern discrepancies between the general perception of corruption in Poland and the understanding of the problem as it is expressed by the Customs Service officials. Despite the fact that all respondents admit that corruption does exist in Poland, only less than 10% of officers are willing to declare that it is one of the most significant issues in the country. As far as the general perception in Poland is concerned, the number of declarations stating that corruption is a very important social problem varies, depending on the date of research, from 1/3 up to 3/4 of mature respondents (Kowalczyk 2010, 2). In our survey, a little more than two-fifths of respondents have agreed to declare that corruption in Poland is an important social issue, but it cannot be considered as the most significant one. Another intriguing and potentially alarming observation is the respondents' tendency to underestimate the scale of corruption-related problems in Poland. Altogether 46.2% of respondents from all customs offices believe that the problem of corruption has been blown out of proportions (19.4% choices for this option) or its scale is comparable to other EC countries (26.8%). At this point, one must note that the latter opinion is, in fact, a statement underestimating the scale of corruption dangers in Poland.

Corruption dangers are inherent in operations of customs services worldwide. It is a result of performing customs duties which imply facing potential bribe-givers or organized crime groups (Mosiej 2007). Interestingly enough, technological development may be considered as a factor facilitating corrupt

exchanges. In the situation of technical sophistication and high crime detention efficiency, corruption is very often perceived as the most reliable means of coping with the existing trade barriers or tariffs. This correlation may be verified by the tendency of stable and continuous growth characterizing the number of corruption-related legal charges leveled against officers of the Customs Service from 2000 till 2007.¹⁸ The greatest growth in corruption-related accusations took place shortly after receiving the EC membership by Poland. That period of time was marked by accelerated sophistication and modernization of the Polish Customs Service done in response to the need for keeping the eastern EC border tight.

How can we interpret the nature of low awareness of corruption-related dangers among the surveyed officers? It seems that the provided answers should be inscribed into a wider socio-economic and political context, including global economic crisis, changes affecting Polish federal authorities, as well as the growing social awareness that the second wave of recession is imminent and its consequences will result in the increase in unemployment and/or the reduction of public expenditure. In the context of local and global contingencies, the problem of corruption may be considered as something of a smaller significance.

A different interpretation allows to seek answers in the character of work for the Customs Service. At this moment, one must remember that all customs services are highly hierarchical organizations which are characterized by a considerable degree of control and regulation. Working for such an institution may be related to a cognitive and behavioral tendency towards minimizing subjectively perceived level of risk, including corruption risks. The trust vested in the durability of bureaucratic structure paves the way for dissolution of responsibility, which results in optimism bias experienced when risk coping strategies are collective and impersonal in nature (Burzyński 2008, 184–185).

Further light on the above-mentioned tendency may be shed by an analysis of factors motivating to take up corruption actions (table 39).

The table presents an interesting tendency which seems to constitute an extension of answers provided for the question concerning assessment of corruption scale in Poland. According to the respondents, corruption is not directly related to organizational factors which are typical of the Customs Service. The decisive majority of officers (86.1%) declare that the lack of control is an insignificant factor of corruption to emerge. Moreover, the motivation to engage in corrupt exchanges is not a result of corruption-prone relationships (81.7% of all declarations). One may therefore say that according to the majority of re-

¹⁸ The growth of the number of corruption-related accusations is very significant and varies from 11 charges leveled in 2001 up to 153 charges in 2007. In 2008 there was a slight decrease in the number of accusations. Source: Program antykorupcyjny polskiej Służby Celnej. 2010–2013+

Table 39. Factors motivating individuals to engage into corrupt exchanges (expressed as percentage)

| Factors | Custom Chambers | | | | | | | | | Average | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|--------|------|------|----------------|------|------|---------|------|------|
| | Katowice | | | Gdynia | | | Biała Podlaska | | | A | B | C |
| | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | | | |
| Low motivation to work | 64.9 | 31.8 | 3.3 | 61.5 | 34.9 | 3.6 | 59.1 | 37.5 | 3.4 | 61.4 | 35.2 | 3.5 |
| Low remuneration | 44.2 | 43.8 | 12.8 | 34.2 | 54.5 | 11.3 | 40.9 | 51.7 | 7.3 | 39.8 | 50.4 | 9.8 |
| Personality factors | 43.0 | 38.4 | 18.6 | 45.8 | 42.2 | 12.0 | 42.5 | 43.6 | 13.9 | 43.7 | 41.8 | 14.6 |
| Material situation | 73.1 | 24.4 | 2.5 | 69.8 | 27.6 | 2.5 | 77.4 | 22.0 | 0.5 | 73.9 | 24.4 | 1.7 |
| Corruption-prone relationships | 83.1 | 15.3 | 1.7 | 84.7 | 14.2 | 1.1 | 78.7 | 19.4 | 1.8 | 81.7 | 16.7 | 1.6 |
| Lack of job security | 73.6 | 24.0 | 2.5 | 81.1 | 17.8 | 1.1 | 77.7 | 20.5 | 1.8 | 77.6 | 20.6 | 1.8 |
| Lack of control | 83.9 | 14.9 | 1.2 | 86.2 | 12.0 | 1.8 | 87.4 | 12.1 | 0.5 | 86.1 | 12.8 | 1.1 |

Note: **A** – insignificant factor, **B** – significant factor, **C** – most significant factor

spondents the origins of corruption are not related to the specificity of working for the Customs Service. This seems a little bit strange, since the work is typically characterized as being furrowed with numerous corruption hazards. Concurrently, the determinants—such as the lack of job security and an individual's material situation—are not perceived as significant motivators when it comes to establishing corrupt exchanges.

On the other hand, another economic factor; namely, low remuneration, is considered to be the prime determinant of corruption—3/5 of the respondents declare the significance of the factor (the number of indications is a combined total of decorations in favor of significant and most significant impact of the variable in question). An individual's personality features is the second mostly chosen factor—altogether 56.4% of choices indicating its significant and most significant impact.

According to the respondents, individuals are predestined for corruption due to material reasons and personality factors (greed, dishonesty, etc.). It is worth mentioning that personality features are related to a dimension of human agency and, therefore, are represented as variables inscribed in a given person's psychic dispositions, not in the external environment of workplace. Respondents' perceptions suggesting that low remuneration is a significant motivator for corruption-related behavior is a foreseeable and rational choice (though negative in a moral sense), especially when one perceives it as a result of a tendency towards elevating one's standard of living.

An investigation into psychological dispositions, which foster corruption-related behavior (personality and temperament factors, motivations, cognitive schemes), is undoubtedly interesting, but this sort of analysis goes well beyond the scope of this work. Concomitantly, the necessity of conducting

in-depth psychological research may be determined by the lack of a straightforward relationship between individual perception of corruption and the fact of being employed by the Customs Service of Poland.

What should be explained, however, is the problem why the workplace environment is generally underestimated in terms of its role in establishing corruption-related perceptions. This may be connected to a tendency towards providing idealized representations of one's workplace which is perceived as a cognitively "domesticated" sphere, a realm of predictability and safety.¹⁹ From this particular cognitive perspective, social pathologies are seen as rooted in phenomena and processes taking place beyond the perimeter of one's domestication. The influences of alien, and probably hostile, social groups or institutions are frequently mentioned in this context. This interpretation seems to be upheld by the breakdown of answers (table 40) received to the following questions:

- Do you think that the highest, central authorities in Poland are really interested in combating corruption?
- Do you think that the authorities of the Customs Service are really interested in combating corruption?
- Do you think that your immediate superiors are really interested in combating corruption?

Table 40. The determination of central authorities, the Customs Service authorities and respondents' immediate superiors in combating corruption (expressed as percentage)

| The following options were available in all the questions | The results (%) | | |
|---|-----------------|------------|------------|
| | question 1 | question 2 | question 3 |
| Certainly yes, the authorities do a lot to fix the problem of corruption | 7.2 | 22.7 | 28.9 |
| The authorities are interested, but with no successes in combating corruption | 23.4 | 23.2 | 20.0 |
| The authorities are more willing to address the problems verbally, rather than fix them | 34.1 | 18.5 | 18.7 |
| One may come to a conclusion that certain decisions undertaken by the authorities foster the dissemination of corruption in the Customs Service | 27.5 | 16.7 | 11.6 |
| Undecided | 7.8 | 18.9 | 20.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The above-mentioned questions refer to the role of state authorities, the Customs Service authorities and respondents' direct superiors in the activity of combating corruption. The table above shows that Customs Service officials

¹⁹ This tendency is also typical of psycho-cognitive processes or risk assessment (see Slovic 1998).

may be characterized by a tendency to adopt a critical attitude towards the Polish state authorities. This is especially observable in comparison to the relevant assessments made with respect to the institutional authorities of the Customs Service and respondents' immediate superiors. From this perspective, the state regulators are represented as ineffective political structures which are not in a position to take any real actions fostering corruption prevention. This is confirmed by an observation that only one in fourteen respondents is willing to ascribe effective anti-corruption activities to the state authorities. In contrast, one in five and one in three respondents declare that the Customs Service authorities' and their direct superiors' activities in combating corruption may be evaluated positively. Moreover, it is worth a reminder that more than one in four Customs Service officials (27.5%) claims that the central regulatory authorities exert negative, almost destructive, pressure on attempts undertaken in order to prevent corruption.

Corruption prevention is assessed most positively when it comes to evaluating actions performed by one's direct superiors. People who represent the immediate organizational or institutional surroundings are evaluated most positively (almost 30% of all positive declarations). At the same time, their actions are least frequently assessed to pose a significant pro-corruption threat—only one in ten respondents is willing to declare that their direct superiors' actions may be destructive to the process of corruption prevention. The estimations referring to actions undertaken by the Customs Service authorities are situated in-between the evaluations concerning central regulatory bodies and respondents' direct superiors.

The tendency to assess central regulatory bodies most negatively in terms of their efforts concerning anti-corruption actions may be a result of the lack of trust vested in the public authorities which, according to Poles, are ineffective, corrupt, focused on taking advantage of their their own privileges, rather than taking care of the public good. One may easily inscribe this explanation into more general tendencies characterizing Polish society since the beginning of political transformations in 1989. In this particular respect, Poles are very often referred to as a society that has been affected by the syndrome of "cultural trauma"; namely, the generalized reaction to abrupt changes which takes place in the spheres of society, economy, or politics and is manifested by the increase of distrust with reference to state institutions and politicians in general,²⁰ the erosion of civic attitudes and uncertainty as far as a vision of the future is concerned (Sztompka 2004, 178–181). Cultural trauma is a collective expression of

²⁰ Interestingly enough, a similar tendency seems to characterize the Customs Service employees. Distrust towards politicians is declared by the overwhelming majority of respondents (80.4%). Likewise, the lack of trust in the Polish legal system is declared by almost half of the surveyed officials (49%).

social fears and uneasiness containing the elements of “cultural disorganization and accompanying disorientation” (2004, 164) which, as a consequence, results in attributing blame to the state authorities conceived as corrupt, ineffective and unable to cope with risks.

However, on the other hand, the trust vested in one’s direct superiors—as compared to the lack of confidence in the central regulatory bodies—may also indicate the aforementioned process of cognitive domestication within the sphere of well-known routines, power structures, organizational systems. It is a consequence of domestication processes that are responsible for respondents’ experiences of continuity and predictability regarding the Customs Service.

The feeling of domestication may, to a certain extent, explain the results referring to corruption risks affecting diverse spheres of Polish public life (table 41).

Table 41. Corruption risks according to the Customs Service officials

| Domains of public life | The level of corruption threat | | | | | Total |
|--|--------------------------------|------|----------|------|-----------|-------|
| | very low | low | moderate | high | very high | |
| Central and territorial state administration | 4.2 | 18.2 | 29.0 | 25.5 | 20.2 | 100.0 |
| Police | 4.2 | 16.6 | 32.0 | 30.4 | 17.4 | 100.0 |
| Army | 30.1 | 35.3 | 22.6 | 8.6 | 3.4 | 100.0 |
| Courts of justice | 7.7 | 18.4 | 26.0 | 26.5 | 21.4 | 100.0 |
| Prosecution | 6.0 | 16.4 | 27.1 | 28.3 | 22.1 | 100.0 |
| Health service | 3.8 | 7.9 | 18.1 | 27.7 | 42.5 | 100.0 |
| Customs Service | 9.1 | 24.2 | 41.7 | 18.4 | 6.6 | 100.0 |
| Education | 34.0 | 32.3 | 24.8 | 6.8 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| Sport institutions | 11.1 | 13.0 | 18.6 | 27.3 | 30.1 | 100.0 |

According to the surveyed Customs Service officials, courts of justice, public security institutions (the police and the prosecutor’s office), as well as sport associations are more prone to high and very high corruption risks than the Customs Service. One in four customs service officials declares that corruption risk is intense or very intense as far as their own workplace is concerned. Concurrently, two-fifths of the respondents tend to assess corruption risk as being on a moderate level. It is worth emphasizing that the aforementioned subjective risk assessments are more conducive to real life, danger-related actions than objective estimations (Burzyński 2008, 28–29).

3. The Assessment of Anti-Corruption Mechanisms

The actual nature of individual actions taken when a subjective representation of moderate risk is being faced remains difficult to predict. Human responses to corruption-related risks may, for instance, depend on the efficiency of anti-corruption mechanisms. At the same time, the fact suggesting that the overwhelming majority of officials (86.1%) perceive the lack of supervision as a factor insignificantly affecting corruption-related decisions may be understood as a sign showing that the awareness of supervisory mechanisms is so intense that respondents are not willing to perceive them as significant variables in the context of corruption risk assessment. The general awareness of effective anti-corruption measures may be partially confirmed by the survey results referring to the assessment of actions taken to combat corruption in the Customs Service of Poland (table 42).

Table 42. The assessment of anti-corruption measures (expressed as percentage)

| Do you consider the level of corruption detectability as satisfactory? | Customs Offices | | | Average |
|--|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| Yes (strongly) | 9.6 | 10.2 | 11.6 | 10.6 |
| Yes (moderately) | 27.9 | 33.2 | 37.6 | 33.6 |
| No (moderately) | 10.8 | 12.0 | 14.1 | 12.6 |
| No (strongly) | 5.0 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 4.5 |
| It's difficult to say | 46.7 | 40.5 | 32.2 | 38.7 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

More than half of the respondents declare that the corruption detectability level is satisfactory. In contrast, less than 20% of customs officials (17.1%) are of a different opinion. This optimistic picture is blurred by the fact that the amount of respondents who cannot (or are not in a position to) express their opinions on the problem is quite high—38.7%. The result is significant enough to postulate a different interpretation, an explanation which is contradictory to the one expressed above.

The results presented in table 42 do not have to be interpreted as an illustration of customs officials’ positive assessment of anti-corruption measures. A contradictory interpretation refers to the cognitive processes of “optimist bias” which are responsible for underestimating of risks that are associated with well-known, routine actions (Studenski 2004). In this context, professional risks are very often downplayed or perceived as insignificant and, therefore, likely to be accepted. This is, in the main, the mechanism of “optimist bias” postulating that people are very frequently predisposed to underestimate well-known risks, even in spite of the fact that the risks in question may be objectively very sig-

nificant or very intense. One may inscribe the following data in this interpretative context (table 43).

Table 43. The assessments of gratification system implemented by the Customs Service authorities to combat corruption (expressed as percentage).

| How do you assess the anti-corruption gratification system implemented in your workplace? | Customs Offices | | | Average |
|---|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| It is a very good one | 1.3 | 0.4 | 2.7 | 1.6 |
| It is a good system, but it could be better | 9.2 | 7.3 | 18.1 | 12.3 |
| It does not motivate to combat corruption | 24.6 | 32.2 | 34.0 | 30.9 |
| I'm not familiar with the system | 65.0 | 60.1 | 45.3 | 55.2 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

An effective anti-corruption system is one of the main mechanisms to be implemented in order to protect the Customs Service against a pathology of this sort. The vast majority (86.1%) of the Customs Service officials do not know about the system or consider it to be ineffective. This means that we are dealing with a serious institutional failure, or with the lack of effective communication channels facilitating the exchange of information in the organizational structure of the Customs Service. A transparent and effective system of anti-corruption motivation is, needless to say, a very significant factor facilitating any actions aiming at combating corruption.

4. Corruption as a Moral Problem

The aforementioned data and suggested interpretations are focused upon the issue of social consciousness of corruption understood from a purely cognitive perspective. This means that the problem is discussed mainly with reference to perceptions of corruption risks among the Customs Service officials, as well as subjective attribution processes aiming to unveil the origins of the phenomenon. One must not forget, however, that corruption is never deprived of its moral aspect. It is related to, on the one hand, an individual's axiological choices and preferences and, on the other hand, to the socially objective systems of norms and values, especially those which indicate the societal significance of public goods (Wnuk-Lipiński 2005, 290–293). Both perspectives—the individual and the collective (public)—are most significant for the issue of corruption which is customarily defined in terms of a conflict taking place between an individual's private interests, moral preferences or aspirations, and

public duties taken together with a sense of public morality derived from a definition of public or state goods. The nature of the conflict boils down to a morally negative practice of appropriating public institutions by private individuals. The mechanism results in abusing public resources (power, money) in order to fulfill one's personal objectives or interests (Kamiński and Kamiński 2004, 143).

Our research aimed at the analysis of social awareness of moral aspects of corrupt exchanges among the Customs Service representatives (table 44).

Table 44. Respondents' opinions on the moral aspects of corruption (expressed as percentage)

| Opinions on corruption | Officials' opinions | | | | | Total |
|---|---------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | |
| "One cannot get things done in Poland without granting a bribe or without networking with other people" | 17.1 | 29.4 | 32.7 | 13.7 | 7.0 | 100.0 |
| "Poles do not treat granting bribes as something immoral" | 14.2 | 42.5 | 23.9 | 10.7 | 8.7 | 100.0 |
| "Poles do not treat receiving bribes as something immoral" | 11.4 | 36.8 | 28.2 | 14.2 | 9.4 | 100.0 |
| "Poles think that people receiving bribes are dishonest" | 23.6 | 40.8 | 18.8 | 7.2 | 9.6 | 100.0 |
| "Poles think that people granting bribes are dishonest" | 16.7 | 34.9 | 29.0 | 8.3 | 11.2 | 100.0 |
| "Granting a bribe should result in a severe imprisonment" | 26.8 | 32.5 | 19.7 | 9.9 | 11.1 | 100.0 |
| "Receiving a bribe should result in a severe imprisonment" | 28.4 | 33.8 | 18.1 | 9.6 | 10.1 | 100.0 |
| "Granting a bribe may be sometimes justified" | 10.0 | 18.9 | 17.4 | 38.3 | 15.4 | 100.0 |
| "People granting bribes are most responsible for corruption" | 16.6 | 24.4 | 25.4 | 18.3 | 15.4 | 100.0 |
| "People (officials) enforcing bribes are most responsible for corruption" | 15.2 | 21.8 | 23.3 | 23.6 | 16.1 | 100.0 |

Note: **A** — I strongly agree, **B** — I agree moderately, **C** — I disagree moderately, **D** — I strongly disagree, **E** — It's hard to tell

The obtained results render delineating an unambiguous picture of public consciousness of moral aspects of corruption among the Customs Service officials difficult. One may, however, discern a certain tendency whose character seems to be related to the nature of working for the Customs Service. The tendency is best visible when one compares the breakdowns of opinions concerning the process of active and passive bribery. According to the respondents, passive bribery is evaluated more severely than the active one. Similarly, respondents (62.2% of all positive answers) are willing to indicate that passive bribery

should be penalized by severe imprisonment. At the same time, granting bribes is less socially acceptable than receiving them. In all the mentioned cases, active forms of bribery are estimated less severely in moral terms.

The Customs Service officials are almost equally divided (46.5% of positive answers as compared with 46.4% of negative answers) when asked about corruption conceived as a mechanism that facilitates coping with problems of everyday life (the first statement in the table above). This may indicate that Poland is characterized by its own specific form of “corruption culture.” Quite surprisingly, despite acknowledging the practical aspect of corruption, respondents are not comparatively willing to justify corruption by the situational context (“Granting a bribe may be sometimes justified”)—only one in three officials declares that attitude.

The data received show that the Customs Service officials are divided as far as their moral perceptions are concerned. Such a result may be interpreted in the historical context of “cultural trauma” in which the readiness to accept corruption, and justify it morally, is conceived as a burden of the Partitions and the legacy of communism. It may be seen as a type of adaptive socialization accomplished according to bygone rules of behavior and, at the same time, a sign of inability to face new social, cultural and political conditions and circumstances.

On the other hand, however, the results showing that passive forms of corruption are more often estimated in a negative way may be explained by the fact that respondents are socialized into adopting an attitude of limited trust towards citizens (everyone may potentially pose a corruption threat). Active forms of corruption are routinely seen in terms of a professional risk: they are perceived as something obvious, cognitively domesticated, something which does not have to be judged severely in moral terms. This perception is a logical continuation of a rule according to which everyone may be considered in terms of a corruption risk. A different cognitive scheme is initialized when one faces passive forms of corruption. In the latter case, bribery is not only perceived as a violation of ethical norms, but also as a malfeasance calling for more severe moral judgments.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the awareness of corruption risks among the Customs Service officials, especially with reference to perceptions concerning the magnitude of the problem in Poland and in the Customs Service, moral estimations of active and passive corrupt exchanges, and assessments referring

to anti-corruption measures. The results are sufficient enough to claim that, contrary to the public opinion on the matter, the overwhelming majority of the Customs Service officials are not willing to declare that corruption is a serious social problem (only one in ten respondents says the contrary). Concurrently, almost 50% of respondents tend to underestimate corruption.

The assessment of the authorities' roles in combating corruption depends upon the scale of cognitive reference. The central authorities are assessed most negatively, whereas respondents' immediate superiors are estimated most positively as far as the subject matter is concerned. The scale of cognitive reference is also instrumental when estimations concerning corruption threats in the Customs Service and other public institutions are being done. In this context, the Customs Service is, as a rule, estimated better than the police, courts of justice, or the federal prosecution.

Respondents claim that corruption should be, first and foremost, attributed to factors related to an employee (low remuneration, personality traits, character) and are not willing to appreciate the role of the Customs Service conceived as specific work environment (the role of borderline corrupt exchanges, problems with supervision). The Customs Service officials are also divided in terms of their assessments concerning active and passive forms of bribery — they are more prone to morally dismiss passive forms of corruption. At the same time, the results may refer to the problem of “corruption culture” in Poland. It is upheld by the statement (acknowledged by almost half of the respondents) that corruption facilitates dealing with problems of everyday life.

Since, the comparative analysis of data referring to the three Customs Chambers showed no significant differences, the analysis is limited to the presentation of the results without providing detailed cross-interpretations.

Chapter Seven

The Customs Service Officers' Attitudes Towards Work

1. Introduction

When the requirements of a holistic, structured and methodologically consistent research are taken into account, sociological investigations into workplace environments should be simultaneously focused on two groups of factors. First of all, one must refer to structural determinants which furnish a particular workplace with a formal structure and an informal organizational climate, as well as organizational culture. Secondly, sociological interpretations must take the dimension of human agency into consideration and, consequently, call our attention to personal factors which supply individual actions with a sense of direction, subjective meaning, motivation and energy. No matter how sophisticated a given organizational structure is, the quality of human work is always conditioned by individual and purely subjective inclinations to understand and comply with the superintended managerial solutions or regulations.

Such an essentially agential way of perceiving workplace environments has led to the outburst of sociological interest vested in human resources management in which employees are perceived as a specific form of assets that call for investment and development by means of training, implementing motivational systems, rationalizing salaries and perks. This approach may be translated into a typically humanistic perspective in sociology whose research strategy is focused on employees' agency; namely, their skills, qualifications, operational knowledge, or attitudes towards work. Methodologically speaking, this operation is tantamount to being focused on the "soft variables" (Sztompka 1999, 4-5) (cultural and consciousness-related determinants of human behavior) at the cost of analyses centered upon "hard variables" related mainly to economic, structural and purely organizational conditionings.

A variable which fosters an effective operationalization of agential resources of cognitive, behavioral and emotional descents is a notion of attitude towards work. The term is endowed with a considerable tradition of sociological interest²¹ and its sense boils down to the existence of relatively stable psychosocial dispositions describing the manner in which an individual is willing to define social situations and inscribe them in the whole plethora of cognitive, emotional and behavioral considerations conditioning his/her activities and a character of choices made.

Corruption risk—as it is postulated in the methodological chapter—may be considered in terms of both structural (or organizational) gaps, as well as motivations or other incentives related to the Customs Service officers' agency. When perceived from the perspective of corruption-related problems, agential motivations may be discussed in the context of negative attitudes towards the workplace. When an employee defines his/her workplace as unsatisfying, hostile, stressful, or constraining, it becomes tantamount to a strong impulse towards a nonconformist negation of the environment's fundamental values, norms or regulations. This negative attitude, in turn, may become an incentive to choose illegal actions (such as taking part in corrupt exchanges, for instance) in order to compensate for subjectively experienced moral losses associated with the work.

2. The Perception of Working for the Customs Service

Sociological and psychological theories predict that an individual cannot possibly be reduced to the reified role of a neutral, disinterested observer of social life. Quite to the contrary, acting agents are creatively driven by subjective assessments of external realities which are mirrored by relevant emotional reactions, notions or conceptualizations as well as preferred behavioral options (Aronson, Wilson, and Ackert 1997, 313–315). The same is true in the context of labor in which an employee's efficiency is not only a result of organizational sophistication or the specialized knowledge he or she is in possession of, but it is also rooted in acquired attitudes suggesting approval, or contrariwise, disapproval of norms, values and regulations typical of a particular workplace or occupational ethos.

From a typically sociological perspective, the emotional component of attitude constitutes a variable which seems relatively unchallenging when it comes

²¹ The notion was introduced to empirical sociology by a groundbreaking study *Polish Peasant in Europe and America* written by William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (see also Znaniecki 1934; Marody 1976; Mika 1981).

to representing it in a form of quantitative results. The component may be expressed as an experienced magnitude of subjective satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with reference to a given type of work. The table below presents the results of subjective work satisfaction/dissatisfaction as it was measured among representatives of the Customs Service.

Table 45. Job satisfaction/dissatisfaction (expressed as percentage)

| Job satisfaction level | Customs Offices | | | Average |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| Strongly satisfied | 12.4 | 13.0 | 12.4 | 12.6 |
| Moderately satisfied | 60.2 | 68.5 | 64.6 | 64.6 |
| Moderately dissatisfied | 13.7 | 8.3 | 12.7 | 11.6 |
| Strongly dissatisfied | 7.1 | 1.4 | 3.2 | 3.7 |
| Undecided | 6.6 | 8.7 | 7.1 | 7.5 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Taking all the Customs Chambers into consideration, one may observe that in each case the majority of respondents declare satisfaction with reference to their job. There are no significant differences between the facilities, although employees in Katowice tend to be least satisfied with their work (72.6% positive declarations in Katowice as compared to 77% in Biała Podlaska and 81.5% in Gdynia). At the same time, the proportion of dissatisfied officers is also highest in Katowice (one in five employees declares the feeling of discontent). As far as all the Customs Chambers are concerned, the relevant proportion decreases systematically from 20.8% of dissatisfied respondents in Katowice, through 15.9% in Biała Podlaska down to less than 10% dissatisfied in Gdynia. All in all, the average level of workplace dissatisfaction amounts to 15.3% dissatisfied officers in all the facilities.

The results constitute a fairly promising scenario for the Customs Service and allow one to predict that the job is a source of strong personal satisfaction for the considerable majority of respondents. As far as the practice of everyday work is concerned, the tendency may be represented as a willingness to approve and accept the pre-existent organizational solutions, the readiness to take care of the quality of work and, what is especially crucial, the decrease in aptitude for taking part in corrupt exchanges (when revealed, corruption is, after all, associated with the irrevocable loss of a satisfying job).

What seems surprising, however, is the fact that the smallest number of satisfied officers was observed in Katowice and not in Biała Podlaska, where the officers have to face extremely stressful and responsible tasks associated with keeping watch on the eastern border of the European Union. Hence, it seems plausible to tell that the acquired distribution of preferences is related,

first and foremost, to purely local conditionings, for instance, to direct actions and decisions made by supervisors of the Customs Chamber in Katowice.

Apart from the aforementioned emotional orientation, attitudes contain a cognitive component comprising the totality of situational definitions and subjective interpretations of the external reality. Moreover, the component enables individuals to refer discursively upon the attitude's subject matter.²² Table 46 presents the Customs Service Officers' notions about their working for the institution.

Table 46. Officers' opinions on the specificity of working for the Customs Service (expressed as percentage)

| Opinions on working for the Customs Service | Customs Offices | | | Average |
|---|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| Working for the CS is just like any other kind of job: it has its ups and downs | 8.8 | 15.4 | 16.7 | 14.2 |
| Working for the CS is different than other jobs: it is more risky and involves greater responsibility | 29.2 | 28.7 | 17.2 | 24.0 |
| Working for the CS is strikingly different than other jobs: it is dangerous and challenging | 46.3 | 40.1 | 46.2 | 44.3 |
| Working for the CS is entirely exceptional: it is very risky, highly dangerous, and very difficult | 15.8 | 15.8 | 19.9 | 17.5 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The overwhelming majority of respondents (85.8% officers from all the facilities) are willing to attribute a certain doze of specificity—involving mostly the features of responsibility and risk—to working for the Customs Service, which enables differentiating it from other kinds of occupations. The option suggesting that working for the Customs Service is strikingly different from other jobs due to its risky and challenging nature was chosen most frequently (in total 44.3% of officers are willing to say so). Simultaneously, a relatively limited number of respondents (14.2% in all the facilities) tend to assert that the service is just an ordinary kind of job, not having anything special or distinctive about it.

The provided answers enable us to expand the aforementioned thesis suggesting that job satisfaction could be related to a significance attached to values

²² Florian Znaniecki's classical definition of attitude, whose center of gravity falls on one's ability to refer reflexively to social situations, is tantamount to the aforementioned cognitive component (cf. Znaniecki 1971, 421).

of hardworking or managerial sophistication. At the same time, the notion suggesting that one's job possesses exceptional challenges, or is related to risks and dangers, could be represented as the officers' expectations concerning the workplace environment (e.g. an inclination towards managerial sophistication) and themselves (being aware that rising one's qualifications by means of training is a relevant answer to the challenges posed by the workplace). The aforementioned hypotheses may be verified by means of interpreting respondents' answers provided to the questions concerning their idea of a "good job" and declarations which refer to the scope of relevant motivational factors. For the sake of sociological clarity, the answers will be analyzed from a theoretical perspective of socio-economic discourses focused upon the notions of "human capital," "modern personality" and "bureaucratic personality."

3. Dimensions of Human Capital: Workplace Values and the Motivation to Work

Contemporary sociological and economic theories of labor are very often spotlighted as to the notion of "human capital" which is customarily treated in terms of knowledge, skills and other qualifications which an employee brings to an organization as an input of his/her agency, creativity, energy or innovation. Much knowledge-centered as it may sound, human capital is also endowed with a less widely known facet of workplace attitudes, values and other agential dispositions which result from the internalized elements of organizational culture.²³ These elements of human capital are particularly relevant to our analysis and show that knowledge and skills are important for the quality of work, but, in fact, they are less concerned with making moral choices at a workplace. In other words, skillful and highly qualified employees are not automatically predisposed to do their job in a morally legitimate manner.²⁴

A variable enabling to capture this less tangible—not evident in diplomas or CV entries—form of human capital is attitudes held towards a workplace environment. A typical question referring to this type of variable is concerned with subjective assessment of features associated with the so-called "good work" (table 47).

²³ This overtly axiological aspect of human capital is especially underlined by Gary S. Becker, a Noble Prize winner in economy, who developed the economic theory of human capital (see Becker 1993, 15–16).

²⁴ This has a special significance in the case of the Customs Service where the motivation to work according to the law and occupational ethos is one of the most essential elements of human capital.

Table 47. The features of a “good work” (expressed as percentage)

| Features of a “good work” | Customs Offices | | | | | | Average | |
|--|-----------------|------|--------|-------|----------------|------|---------|------|
| | Katowice | | Gdynia | | Biała Podlaska | | | |
| | yes | no | yes | no | yes | no | yes | no |
| High remuneration | 53.3 | 44.6 | 59.4 | 37.7 | 53.3 | 43.0 | 55.2 | 41.8 |
| Compliance with one's interests | 39.7 | 60.5 | 31.7 | 68.3 | 32.1 | 67.9 | 34.0 | 66.0 |
| Safety at work | 1.3 | 98.7 | 2.2 | 97.8 | 5.4 | 94.6 | 3.3 | 96.7 |
| Occupational stability | 60.8 | 39.2 | 47.0 | 53.0 | 44.8 | 55.2 | 49.8 | 50.2 |
| Promotion prospects | 27.8 | 72.2 | 38.1 | 61.9 | 36.7 | 63.3 | 34.7 | 65.3 |
| Prospects for upgrading one's qualifications | 13.1 | 86.9 | 19.4 | 80.6 | 19.6 | 80.4 | 17.8 | 82.2 |
| Good interpersonal relations | 29.1 | 70.9 | 35.4 | 64.6 | 32.9 | 67.1 | 32.6 | 67.4 |
| Clean and intellectual character of labor | 0.4 | 99.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.8 | 99.2 | 0.5 | 99.5 |
| Good organization | 19.4 | 80.6 | 22.4 | 77.6 | 15.2 | 84.8 | 18.6 | 81.4 |
| Ensuring satisfaction and calm | 34.2 | 65.8 | 23.1 | 76.9 | 30.4 | 69.6 | 29.2 | 70.8 |

The vision of a “good work”—as declared by respondents—enables us to delineate a scope of expectations which individuals possess with regard to their own workplace environment. In this particular respect, data interpretation renders possible the analysis of attitudes towards the material (remuneration, job stability) and extra-material (good interpersonal relationship at work, being in line with one's personal interests) aspects of work.

According to the respondents, having a “good job” entails, first and foremost, the satisfaction of purely material needs. In this respect, the surveyed officers expect: (1) high remunerations (the average of 55.2% indications, with the chamber in Gdynia enjoying the greatest number of choices—almost 3/5 of all answers); (2) occupational stability (with the average of 49.8% and the highest number of indications in Katowice—60%); (3) promotion prospects which scored 34.7% on average and noted 38.1% of all positive indications (the biggest number) in Gdynia. It is worth mentioning that the choices indicating that the material aspects are instrumental as far as the quality of work is concerned are totally rational, especially when one remembers that respondents faced the grim awareness of economic crisis and the possible reduction of costs related to the functioning of budget sphere in Poland.

A different interpretation is needed in order to explain choices made with reference to the extra-material aspects of work. The contemporary sociological theory has been structured by an assumption suggesting that the growing market expectations and technological sophistication (especially in the reality of

post-industrial societies) are conducive as far as the coming of a new type of worker is concerned. The new type of employee is often defined as a flexible individual whose cognitive and intellectual capabilities are fit enough to match the growing amount of information in social circulation, and whose motivations are compatible with a new form of workplace environment in which raising one's qualifications is a condition necessary but not sufficient for being considered as a productive employee (Krzysztofek, Szczepański 2002; Beck 1994). In this context, extra-material aspects of work are acquiring greater significance than purely economic ones. The following characteristics are especially valuable in the reality of post-industrial economy:

- possibilities of upgrading one's qualifications conceived as a principal means of coping with changeable labor markets whose logic is based upon the imperative of perpetual innovation;
- the relatedness of work to one's personal interest, which could be seen as a powerful motivating factor instrumental as far as acquiring new knowledge and skills is concerned;
- benevolent interpersonal relationships at a workplace which foster informal learning in the course of day-to-day interactions;
- functional and sophisticated work organization considered as a positive model for the employees;
- clean and intellectual character of work which facilitates an employee's cognitive development and brushing up one's qualifications after hours.

The survey showed that the extra-material job characteristics are not as valuable as the previously mentioned material aspects. As far as the extra-material characteristics are concerned, respondents are willing to indicate two features, namely "compliance with one's interests" (the average of 34% of indications in all offices) and "good interpersonal relationships" (the average of 32.6% of indications in all offices) to be as important as the previously analyzed material job characteristics. The remaining features do not enjoy as frequent indications as the two mentioned above. The respective results are: 18.6% for proper work organization, 17.8% for opportunities for raising one's qualifications, and only 0.5% for the clean and intellectual character of work.

The surprisingly small proportion of choices taken in favor of the extra-material job characteristics may present a slightly unnerving tendency to perceive one's occupation only in the context of monetary gains associated with it. A noteworthy fact is that only the perspective of getting high salary receives more than half of all positive answers concerning the qualities of a "good job." Hence, it seems plausible to predict that we face a considerable risk that the employees—who cannot appreciate values of investing in one's qualifications or effective job organization—will not be motivated to create a satisfying workplace in which the extra-material values will flourish. In this case, one faces the threat of having a stressful or even hostile workplace popu-

lated by de-motivated and passive employees who are unable or unwilling to initiate and implement any constructive innovation or positive structural reconstruction.

A possible interpretation of respondents' answers is related to the institutional character of the Customs Service as a very specific, highly hierarchized (stratified) form of labor environment. The extra-material job characteristics are mostly concerned with the dimension of the worker's agency seen as their potential of creativity, innovativeness and relative independence of the pre-existent systemic and structural conditions (including the pre-given power relations).²⁵ Hence, it seems plausible that agency is less significant in the world of hierarchical organizations and institutions structured upon the ultimate dissolution of human subjectivity into a fossilized, codified, and non-negotiable network of multilateral role expectations and pre-established power relationships. In this way, the durability of hierarchical organizations depends upon an individual's ability to comply with the superintended managerial solutions, and the critical willingness to accept the collective way of thinking according to which individual aspirations and objectives must give way to the collectivity. This type of workplace environment, to put it otherwise, socializes its employees to adopt an attitude of passive acceptance with reference to the pre-existent organizational models or solutions and the dominant labor ethos. A vision of effective job organization is no longer a motivational factor for individuals deprived of a means to assume active roles in it. Hence, we witness a classical type of anomie in which values (socially acceptable objectives) are not consistent with norms; that is, socially sanctioned means of achieving the goals. In this specific situation, as a consequence, individuals are driven mostly by the material job characteristics which indicate the scope of one's expectations concerning the participation in the socially dominant consumption patterns. Let us remind that high payment is a factor boosting human performance outside one's workplace, which, at the same time, enables one to realize his/her agency in everyday social situations.

The aforementioned interpretation may be verified by the distribution of answers provided to the question concerning motivating factors that are typical of the Customs Service organizational structures (table 48).

The motivating factor named as "considerable increase in remuneration" has been proven to be the most significant and, at the same time, the sole determinant to have any impact on the quality of work. 51.6% of respondents (in total) declare this factor to be the significant determinant and 12.9% of officers claim that the factor could be seen as the most significant motivator. The re-

²⁵ The sociological perceptive on agency is centered on an actor's abilities to act in spite of pre-given structural (socio-cultural) constraints. This term refers to individuals and social groups (collective agency) seen as active creators of social realities who are capable of initiating changes in society and culture (see especially Giddens 1984, 2; Sztompka 1991, 56).

Table 48. Motivating factors that may enhance Customs Service officers' quality of work (expressed as percentage)

| Motivating factors | Customs Offices | | | | | | | | | Average | | |
|---|-----------------|------|------|--------|------|------|----------------|------|------|---------|------|------|
| | Katowice | | | Gdynia | | | Biała Podlaska | | | | | |
| | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C |
| Occupational duties delineated more precisely | 75.5 | 20.3 | 4.1 | 73.4 | 21.9 | 4.7 | 73.5 | 24.1 | 2.4 | 74.0 | 22.4 | 3.6 |
| Bigger job stability | 54.8 | 39.8 | 5.4 | 68.6 | 29.2 | 2.2 | 66.3 | 30.8 | 2.9 | 63.9 | 32.7 | 3.4 |
| Introduction of wider promotion prospects | 70.1 | 23.7 | 6.2 | 63.5 | 30.3 | 6.2 | 59.4 | 33.2 | 7.4 | 63.6 | 29.7 | 6.7 |
| Better social security | 88.8 | 11.2 | 0.0 | 82.8 | 16.4 | 0.7 | 87.3 | 12.5 | 0.3 | 86.3 | 13.3 | 0.3 |
| Bigger authority and competences | 88.4 | 10.8 | 0.8 | 90.9 | 8.4 | 0.7 | 85.4 | 13.8 | 0.8 | 87.9 | 11.3 | 0.8 |
| Improvement of co-operation procedures between customs chambers | 90.9 | 7.1 | 2.1 | 92.3 | 6.6 | 1.1 | 92.6 | 6.9 | 0.5 | 92.0 | 6.8 | 1.1 |
| Better relationships with superlatives | 82.6 | 14.1 | 3.3 | 88.7 | 10.2 | 1.1 | 85.7 | 13.5 | 0.8 | 85.8 | 12.7 | 1.6 |
| Simplification of customs procedures | 64.3 | 30.3 | 5.4 | 80.7 | 17.2 | 2.2 | 72.7 | 24.4 | 2.9 | 72.9 | 23.8 | 3.4 |
| Considerable increase in remuneration | 40.7 | 46.1 | 13.3 | 30.7 | 55.5 | 13.9 | 35.8 | 52.3 | 11.9 | 35.5 | 51.6 | 12.9 |

Note: **A** – insignificant motivating factor, **B** – significant motivating factor, **C** – most insignificant motivating factor

maining factors are appreciated by a relatively small amount of respondents. For instance, greater job stability and the introduction of better promotion prospects are important for little more than 1/3 of the respondents (respectively 36.4% and 36.1% of all indications provided). Concurrently, the simplification of occupational procedures and the introduction of a more precise framework for occupational duties are significant motivators for only one in four officers (respectively 27.2% and 26% of all the indications provided).

Generally speaking, the overwhelming majority of respondents (from 63.8% up to 92%) tend to underestimate all the motivators that focus on managerial solutions improving working conditions and the organization of labor itself. This particular tendency, nevertheless, seems to be well inscribed into the interpretative horizon which was postulated earlier in the text. One may observe that the least popular factors are related to problems referring to managerial organization as well as the employee's agency. When presented in the decreasing sequence, the factors are as follows:

- “improvement of cooperation procedures between the Customs Chambers”—92% of all negative choices;
- “bigger authority and competences”—87.9% of all negative choices;
- “better relationships with superlatives”—85.8% of all negative indications;
- “occupational duties delineated more precisely”—74% of all negative choices;
- “simplification of customs procedures”—72.9 of all negative choices.

It seems that the received breakdown of the officers' choices makes perfect sense from the perspective of the cultural ideal of personality typical of individuals entering the world of hierarchal and overtly bureaucratized organizations. As opposed to the reality of free market entrepreneurs—in which individuals are said to exhibit the features of “modern personality” (Krzysztofek, Szczepański 2002, 43–47); namely, agency, initiative, risk taking and resourcefulness—the world of hierarchical bureaucracies prefers passive employees who are willing to submit themselves to the pre-existent structural constraints, and who are able to perceive organizational objectives as being more valuable or crucial than their own personal goals or aspirations.²⁶ Let us have a second look at the data concerning the preferred characteristics of a “good job”. What can be observed in this context is the fact that respondents are not willing to admit that such qualities as managerial sophistication or possibilities to develop one's human capital could be subsumed within the ideal picture of a good workplace. Hence, it is no surprise that similar characteristics are not perceived as factors that may increase an employee's motivation to work.

A similar observation could be made with reference to the spectrum of negative choices referring to the introduction of simplified and more precise occupational procedures and the elevation of personal competences or authority. All those characteristics relate to the dimension of human agency (the elevation of personal competences) and propensity for innovation (the simplification and transformation of already existing occupational procedures). It seems that the lack of motivation of this particular kind may indicate that the pattern of “modern personality” has not been disseminated among the Customs Service Officers yet. To cut a long story short, this is precisely the pattern of modern personality that is actualized by means of human agency, predilection for innovation, penchant for self-reliance and self-sophistication and broadening one's participation in social, economic and cultural life.²⁷

At this moment, one must remember that predicting motivational factors is strongly related to forecasting human activities, which itself is subsumed within the behavioral component of attitudes. One may, therefore, say that respondents

²⁶ As far as sociological tradition is concerned, one may use the term „bureaucratic personality” or “a well behaved man” in this particular place (see Znaniecki 1974).

²⁷ The complete 9 factorial model of modern personality was introduced by Inkeles and Smith (1974).

perfectly fit the reality and *modus operandi* of hierarchical organizations whose constitutive element is the aversion with reference to any changes resulting in the transformation of the pre-existent rules of conduct. This, as it were, overtly conservative attitude is at the same time related to the lack of motivation as well as pressure towards brushing up one's occupational skills and knowledge. At this point, however, one must admit that such a conservative attitude is not necessarily an unambiguously negative characteristic which makes an individual unable to perform his/her occupational duties in an effective and socially acceptable way. Quite to the contrary, the respondents' choices present a degree of conformity with reference to rules structuring their organizational structures.

4. The Patterns of Risk Perception and Risk Taking

The aforementioned considerations may serve as a comfortable interpretative background for problems referring to risk perception and risk taking. When understood as uncertainty triggered by the experienced probability of loss or damage, risk is an unavoidable correlate to change or innovation. One may, therefore, say that this type of uncertainty may be conceptualized under the umbrella term of "speculative risk," a technical notion in risk studies describing all situations in which an individual faces a probability of loss on his/her way to achieve certain valuable objectives (Studenski 2004, 26–28). Table 49 shows the pattern of speculative risk taking with reference to hypothetical investment opportunities.

Table 49. Officers' choices with reference to conservative and transgressive actions possibilities (expressed as percentage)

| "If I had a bigger amount of money, I would..." | Customs Chambers | | | Average |
|--|------------------|--------|-------------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| Deposit it in a bank | 43.0 | 45.4 | 39.1 | 42.2 |
| Buy state bonds | 14.3 | 10.8 | 17.2 | 14.5 |
| Invest in shares | 3.9 | 2.0 | 4.4 | 3.5 |
| Establish my own business venture | 27.8 | 18.1 | 22.7 | 22.7 |
| Invest it in rising my qualifications (higher education) | 10.4 | 13.3 | 16.6 | 13.9 |
| Buy luxury goods, exotic package tours, etc. | 0.0 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 1.3 |
| Other | 0.4 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 1.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The data show that the respondents are more willing to assume conservative strategies with reference to situations of speculative risk. More than 56.7% of officers from all the surveyed facilities would undertake typically conservative investment options, such as depositing money in a bank or buying state-licensed bonds. Risky strategies—such as investing into shares on the stock exchange or establishing one's own business venture—are chosen by only 26.2% of all respondents. At this point, a crucial remark must be made. The survey was conducted in the times of financial crisis and respondents were “bombarded” with mass media coverage concerning the uncertain character of investment. This means that the questioned officers could be fully aware of the uncertain character of financial operations performed on any stock exchanges worldwide (by the way, this option was chosen only by 3.5% of all respondents). A different, noteworthy result is a relatively limited popularity of a fairly conservative option²⁸ which is investing money into developing one's personal career. This strategy was chosen by 13.8% of all respondents (officers from Biała Podlaska tended to have chosen the factor most frequently—16.6% of positive indications).

From a sociological perspective, risk-taking patterns are not only a matter of personal decision. They are inscribed into a wider socio-cultural context in which they fulfill certain roles that are functional in terms of an organization conceived as a working totality (Douglas, Wildavsky 1983; Douglas 1994, 12; Rayner 1992, 86). As far as the reality of modern capitalist societies is concerned, the predilection for risk taking and the aversion to conservative action strategies are features characterizing both free market entrepreneurs and, what is more interesting, individuals working in highly hierarchical organizations. In the latter context, risk taking is a function of confidence and stability granted by the supposedly long-lasting and unwavering character of contemporary hierarchical organizations (Douglas, Wildavsky 1983, 90–95; 99–101). In this case, the surprising penchant for uncertainty is not a result of recklessness that is somehow related to the pattern of modern personality. Hence, the lack of acceptance of high speculative risk (only 3.5% of the officers were ready to invest money on a stock exchange) is probably a matter of the question itself whose form and wording suggest a typically economic context of action. Thus, the question seems to belong to a repertoire of queries designed to diagnose features of the modern personality.

When conceived as an outcome of security given by the stability of working in a bureaucratic environment, the aforementioned predilection for risk tak-

²⁸ In principal, decisions concerning one's educational future can be very risky. It is mostly due to the generic changeability of labor markets. However, in fact, it seems that the factor is not a crucial determinant in the case of the budget sphere employees who may take up studies with a notion of occupational stability.

ing is manifested by answers provided for a question concerning strategies of making real-life choices. The question is not directly associated with any economic or financial context and it shows that the majority of the respondents (67%) are interested in calculating both gains and losses when real-life decisions are taken. The gains alone are important for only 7.1% of the surveyed officers and the losses alone are valid for less than one in ten respondents (9.4%). In this particular case, a univocally conservative perspective was replaced by a typically rational attitude taking a loss/gain calculation into account. Such a calculated and rational activity of risk taking is well rooted in the reality of bureaucratic hierarchies which are endowed with routine procedures facilitating contingency planning and risk management, as well as diffusion of responsibility across a great number of occupational roles or positions.

For the sake of having a more holistic outlook on the patterns of risk taking (or risk avoidance), one must notice that only 13.9% of all respondents are willing to invest money into raising one's knowledge and skills. This is especially indicative in the context of the general tendency towards avoiding situations of speculative uncertainty and the readiness to take rationally calculated decisions. It seems, therefore, that the answers can be also inscribed into the pattern of bureaucratic personality and the interpretative horizon associated with this particular notion.

If one assumes a bird's eye perspective on the data referring to the preferred features of a "good job," motivational factors and risk-taking patterns, it seems plausible enough to conclude that the general tendency among the surveyed Customs Service Officers is to accept the attitude of a person who fits perfectly into the reality of hierarchical organizations. In the context of values and motivations, this is represented as the focus on the material aspects of work, which may constitute an important interpretative framework for the probability of corrupt exchanges.

One may say that the respondents are characterized by the existence of external motivation to work in which financial gratification is the principal incentive (Łukaszewski, Doliński 2000, 457). What seems unnerving is the simultaneous lack of cognitive and emotional mechanisms associated with the model internal motivation. In the latter case, individuals are motivated mainly by the character of work. What is also noticeable is the absence of attainment motivation which is focused on a typically personal need of self-perfection manifested by a stable behavioral tendency to reach beyond the established standards of performance with respect to the quality or efficiency of labor (2000, 457–461). At this point a fairly pessimistic reflection can be made. There are a number of facets to external motivation and one of them are gains obtained from corrupt exchanges. Hence, it seems plausible that an externally motivated employee is more prone to corruption than an individual who is

driven by the mechanisms of internal motivation. In the latter case, the fear of being fired is a powerful deterrent discouraging employees from engaging into activities threatening their workplace.

5. Perceived Stress Levels

Differences between the mechanisms of external and internal motivation are endowed with another aspect gesturing to a fact that internally motivated work is usually perceived as being more satisfying or interesting. At the same time, one may predict that this particular kind of work is also seen as being less stressful since an employee’s performance is powered by such drives as curiosity, self-perfection or goal accomplishment (the last factor is even more visible in the case of attainment motivation).²⁹

The questionnaire contains a question concerning the level of stress felt by the officers during their work. The results are provided in table 50.

Table 50. The assessment of stress related to working for the Customs Service (expressed as percentage)

| Stress level assessments | Customs Offices | | | Average |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| | Katowice | Gdynia | Biała Podlaska | |
| Very intense | 26.6 | 18.2 | 33.8 | 27.1 |
| Moderately intense | 64.7 | 67.6 | 59.3 | 63.3 |
| Moderately low | 7.9 | 13.5 | 6.9 | 9.2 |
| Very low | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The overwhelming majority of the respondents tend to declare that the stress level related to working for the Customs Service is intense (90.4% of all indications combining very intense stress level and moderately intense stress level). At the same time, less than one in ten Officer says that the experienced stress level could be defined as low (9.6% of all indications combining very low stress level and moderately low stress level).

Given the character of the work, its complicated and risky nature, the results are not surprising. Moreover, the aforementioned preferences are also mir-

²⁹ The nature of internal motivation boils down to the fact that its mechanisms are functional even in a situation when lower-range needs have been satisfied (see Łukaszewski, Doliński 2000, 457).

rered by answers provided for a question concerning occupational burnout; namely, the state of intellectual, mental and physical fatigue which is associated with jobs requiring a great deal of interpersonal relationship at a workplace (Sęk 2004). In this context, burnout is, as it were, a negative reaction to the harmful impact of the labor environment occurring when the workplace is perceived as stressful, ineffectively organized (e.g. faulty interpersonal communication, irrational division of labor causing overwork). A similarly important role is ascribed to stressful relationships with the organization's external environment (especially its clients), overly bureaucratic character of work and, last but not least, bad relationships with supervisors (Fengler 2001). Again, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (almost 80%) are willing to declare subjective symptoms of burnout. In this case, respondents state that they feel the symptoms of burnout "from time to time" (approx. 40%), "very often" (15.7%), and "very rarely" (23.6%).

Having taken into account the declared levels of stress and burnout, it is interesting to observe the breakdown of stress factors (table 51).

Similarly to the analysis of motivational factors done earlier in the text, an interpretation of the stress factors breakdown has certain difficulties. In both cases, one has to focus on the interpretation of negative declarations postulating that a given stress factor is perceived as insignificant by respondents. At the very beginning, one must take notice that all the stress factors are rejected as insignificant by the majority of the respondents (depending on the factor, from 60.1% up to 99.7% of the surveyed officers provide negative declarations). The most significant stress factors are: (1) invalid motivational system (40% of all declarations; the factor was chosen most frequently in Gdynia—42.3%); (2) overwork (the factor was chosen by 35.2% of all the officers; the factor was chosen most often in Biała Podlaska—41.3%); (3) the lack of job stabilization (28.7% of all declarations; the factor was chosen most often in Katowice—39.6%); (4) low salary (24.5% of all choices; the factor was indicated most frequently in Gdynia—33.6%); (5) stress associated with customs control (24.1% of all declarations; the factor was chosen most frequently in Biała Podlaska—29.1%).

In the context of previously quoted data, it is difficult to provide an unambiguous interpretation of the received, negative answers stating that none of the mentioned stress factors is relevant and significant for the majority of respondents. This result seems especially surprising in the context of data related to the feeling of burnout which is a consequence of stress factors typical of a given workplace. The particularly telling example are declarations concerning negative relationships at work and negative relationships with supervisors which were seen as insignificant stress factors by respectively 96.4% and 99.7% of the supposedly burnt out employees. One possible answer to that interpretative ambiguity is related to the declared stressful character of motiva-

Table 51. Perceived stress determinants (expressed as percentage)

| Stress factors | Customs Office | | | | | | | | | Average | | |
|---|----------------|------|-----|--------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|---------|------|-----|
| | Katowice | | | Gdynia | | | Biała Podlaska | | | | | |
| | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C |
| Performing customs control; the relationship between an officer and a controlled person | 81.5 | 15.0 | 3.5 | 77.9 | 19.5 | 2.7 | 70.9 | 26.9 | 2.2 | 75.9 | 21.4 | 2.7 |
| Overwork | 68.7 | 25.6 | 5.7 | 69.5 | 27.5 | 3.1 | 58.7 | 33.8 | 7.5 | 64.7 | 29.6 | 5.6 |
| Low salary | 80.6 | 17.6 | 1.8 | 66.4 | 27.1 | 6.5 | 78.9 | 18.0 | 3.0 | 75.5 | 20.7 | 3.8 |
| Corrupt proposals | 99.6 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 98.9 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 97.0 | 2.8 | 0.2 | 98.2 | 1.5 | 0.2 |
| Threats coming from controlled persons | 92.1 | 7.0 | 0.9 | 98.1 | 1.5 | 0.4 | 87.8 | 11.4 | 0.8 | 92.1 | 7.2 | 0.7 |
| Negative relationships at work | 95.6 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 95.8 | 3.8 | 0.4 | 97.2 | 2.5 | 0.3 | 96.4 | 3.4 | 0.2 |
| Negative relationships with one’s supervisors | 85.9 | 11.5 | 2.6 | 88.5 | 10.3 | 1.1 | 90.6 | 9.1 | 0.3 | 99.7 | 10.1 | 1.2 |
| Lack of job stabilization | 60.4 | 31.7 | 7.9 | 75.2 | 21.8 | 3.1 | 75.3 | 22.4 | 2.2 | 71.3 | 24.7 | 4.0 |
| Rules and procedures being too complicated | 78.0 | 19.8 | 2.2 | 81.3 | 16.4 | 2.3 | 84.4 | 15.0 | 0.6 | 81.7 | 16.7 | 1.5 |
| The lack of supervisor’s trust | 84.6 | 12.8 | 2.6 | 89.7 | 8.4 | 1.9 | 78.1 | 18.8 | 3.0 | 83.4 | 14.0 | 2.6 |
| Necessity to interpret legal regulations single-handedly | 81.5 | 14.1 | 4.4 | 79.0 | 18,3 | 2.7 | 87.5 | 10.2 | 2.2 | 83.3 | 13.8 | 2.9 |
| Working without the supervisor’s assistance | 98.7 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 96.6 | 3.4 | 0.0 | 95.6 | 4.2 | 0.3 | 96.7 | 3.2 | 0.1 |
| Unclear criteria of promotion | 77.1 | 21.1 | 1.8 | 71.8 | 24.8 | 3.4 | 72.0 | 24.7 | 3.3 | 73.3 | 23.8 | 2.9 |
| Invalid motivational system | 59.9 | 36.1 | 4.0 | 57.6 | 37.0 | 5.3 | 62.0 | 33.2 | 4.7 | 60.1 | 35.2 | 4.7 |

Note: **A** – insignificant stress factor, **B** – significant stress factor, **C** – most significant stress factor

tional system functioning in the Customs Service. The respondents are not sufficiently motivated to work effectively, which, as a consequence, results in experiencing stress associated with coping with daily duties.

From the perspective of the received data, one may therefore assume that the environment of the Customs Service is perceived as stressful in consequence of its objective character as a highly hierarchical organization. It means,

to put it otherwise, that the very fact of working for such an organization is perceived as being stressful in itself. Similarly, the absence of agency is manifested as the indifferent attitude to occupational roles and duties. What is the reason for having such a tendency? According to contemporary sociologists, we live in a late modern social organization in which human agency, freedom of choice and individual reflexivity are glorified as the pillars of contemporary, overtly consumerist “axiology” (Bauman 2000; 2001; Giddens 1991). In this type of society, agency and individual liberty are propagated and disseminated by the cultural norms inscribed in the reality of late capitalist societies as the only valid strategy of constructing one’s self-identity.³⁰ It seems plausible enough, therefore, to suppose that individuals working for hierarchical organizations feel stress and burnout as a result of their subordination to the type of environment that is completely at odds with the general rules of the culture. Tentative and abstract as it may sound, this interpretation opens up a quite promising direction of sociological research.

6. Conclusions

The overwhelming majority of the respondents are satisfied with the job for the Customs Service (altogether 77.2% of all respondents from all the Customs Offices) and fully understand the specificity of customs duties, especially with reference to risks and challenges associated with them (in total 85.8% of all officers). Material aspects of the performed job are the main motivational factors for the questioned respondents. The officers feel motivated by a considerable raise of salary (64.5% of all indications), the introduction of better promotion prospects (36.4% of all choices), and bigger job stability (36.1% of all declarations). The processes of internal motivation do not take any significant role in the quality of job performed by the respondents. This is also manifested in the breakdown of answers concerning their visions of an ideal “good job” in which the material determinants are significantly more important than extra-material ones, including prospects for occupational development or a good organization of labor. This particular tendency seems to be subsumed within the model of “bureaucratic personality” characterizing individuals as officers performing highly regulated duties in highly hierarchical organizations. The diagnosis is also verified by the dominating patterns of risk taking and risk avoidance. In this context, respondents are characterized by a fairly conservative tendency to-

³⁰ Let us remind that the declared significance towards the material aspects of job is a factor fostering human agency outside one’s workplace.

wards risk in hypothetical investment situations and a rational strategy of benefit versus loss calculation in making real-life choices.

Although respondents declare job satisfaction, the majority of officers (90.4%) qualify working for the Customs Service as a highly stressful kind of job. At the same time, more than half of them experience burnout. Despite being stressed, respondents are not willing to provide any coherent information concerning the nature of stress factors they have been experiencing. None of the stress factors is indicated as significant for the majority of officers. The most significant ones are indicated by the minority of respondents which includes: invalid motivational system (39.9%), overwork (35.2) and the lack of job stabilization (28.7%). The discrepancy between the general perception of work as being stressful and the inability to indicate significant stress factors may be explained by the feeling of dissonance taking place between the reality of work for a hierarchical organization and the cultural ideology of late modern society whose center of gravity lies in agency, freedom and nonconformity; namely, the qualities which are highly dysfunctional for any hierarchical job environment.

Conclusions

Towards the Integrated Framework for Corruption Risk Management

The main aim of this monograph is to suggest a multidimensional sociological perspective in empirical studies concerning corruption-related problems which affect the Customs Service of Poland. Our research oscillated around the formative idea suggesting that corrupt exchanges could be conceptualized in terms of a social hazard to which a certain dose of probability may be ascribed. Needless to say, the whole work has been cognitively and conceptually structured by the idea of risk.

The concept of risk paves the way for a methodology that aims to manage and contextualize corruption-related dangers in order to attenuate their intensity and probability of occurrence. Since risks belong to the discourse of future, the study is also a gesture taken with reference to providing managerial solutions against forthcoming dangers. In this specific sense, thinking in terms of risks could be perceived as the most conspicuous form of institutional reflexivity involving “the regularized use of knowledge about the circumstances of social life as a constitutive element in its organization and transformation” (Giddens 1991, 20). The reflexivity of risk-centered considerations is implied in the very nature of uncertainty that brings social practice and future-related actions present within one interpretative horizon.

The scale of corruption-related risks may be represented and estimated in terms of a combined consequence of structural-organizational factors (e.g. faulty management structures, unsupportive organizational cultures, or dysfunctional procedures of delegating occupational responsibilities) as well as agential characteristics manifested by dispositions that may be considered as an employee’s input into the organizational functioning (attitudes towards work, perceptions of corruption and subjective assessments of corruption-related risks).

The aforementioned distinction, however, has been conceptualized to grasp the problem of corruption risks in a coherent form of methodological considerations. However, in the practice of everyday life, agential and structural determinants are yoked together to create real-life events and social processes. As Piotr Sztompka comments on the inseparable character of the determinants:

In the model of social becoming, the levels of structure in operation and of agents in actions will be treated neither as analytically separable nor as mutually reducible. Instead a third, intermediate level will be postulated, and it will be claimed that it represents the only true substance of social reality, the specific social fabric. If we think of any empirical event or phenomenon in a society, anything that is actually happening, is it not always, without exception, a fusion of structures and agents, of operation and action? Show me an agent who is not enmeshed in some structure. Show me a structure which exists apart from individuals. Show me an action which does not participate in societal operation. Show me societal operation not resolving into action. There are neither structureless agents nor agentless structures. (1991, 91–91)

Having taken the above-mentioned remarks into consideration, we decided to conceptualize corruption risks as associative totalities of structural gaps, which facilitate taking part in corrupt exchanges, and internalized, agential incentives for corrupt conduct that may function as motivators for undertaking illegal actions.

Our research has proven that both types of corruption-prone determinants are functional in the context of the Customs Service of Poland. More specifically, the following factors have been observed and diagnosed:

- structural-organizational dimension: (1) necessity to interpret legal regulations by oneself; that is, facing the lack of reliable, ready-made interpretative procedures at one's disposal; (2) insufficient number of supervisory actions and the lack of effective supervisory procedures; (3) drawbacks as far as the recruitment of personnel is concerned; (4) absence of unified organizational standards to be applied at the borderline and internal customs facilities; (5) lack of effective motivational system; (6) absence of constructive incentives for reporting on corruption; (7) erosion of the organization's culture of trust;
- agential dimension: (1) tendency to downplay corruption-related challenges and risks; (2) unwillingness to discern the specificity of working for the Customs Service and its intrinsic relationship to corruption risks; (3) lack of unambiguously negative assessments made with reference to corruption; (4) dominance of material incentives conceived as the primary sources of motivation for work (external motivation); (5) unwillingness to appreciate extra-material characteristics of the workplace; (6) declared intensity of stress and occupational burnout.

Given the scope of negative consequences associated with corruption-related risks, it becomes evident that an effective organization is in a position to implement effective strategies of corruption risk management. According to the ISO 31000: 2009 norm, risk management is a holistic, systemic process which is an integral part of every organization. Moreover, it becomes embedded in the organization's structure, culture and practices, and should be tailored specifically for the organizational purposes and its special needs (ISO 31000: 2009). More specifically, and referring to the aforementioned determinants of corruption, one may postulate that the effective and integrated corruption risk management in the Customs Service should observe the following criteria (The list complies with the ISO 31000: 2009 guidelines):

- **Risk management creates and protects values.** In the context of the Customs Service operations, effective anti-corruption risk procedures and policies are responsible for (apart from minimizing direct economic losses associated with the influx of illegal goods or individuals) the reinforcement of public trust towards the organization. Effective corruption risk management is an integral element of culture of all-inclusive trust expectations with reference to state and public institutions in Poland.
- **Risk management is an integral part of organizational processes.** Effective risk-minimizing regulations must be implemented across a variety of posts and positions at the workplace. Additionally, the process of recruiting new personnel must take risk management into consideration. In other words, since corruption risk is rooted in individuals' personal dispositions, effective risk attenuation starts with human management considerations.
- **Risk management is a part of decision making.** The very process of decision making must be safeguarded against corruption threats. Uncertainty experienced with reference to ambiguous legal regulations and decisions undertaken in the wake of implementing them are serious risk amplifiers. Hence, effective risk management must be focused on a single individual's agency.
- **Risk management is systematic and structured.** Effective anti-corruption policies must address structural, organizational and agential dimensions of the workplace. Its integrated nature is manifested by a degree of compliance between superintended managerial systems, and real-life decisions and actions undertaken at the workplace.
- **Risk management is based on the best available information and is capable of continual improvement and enhancement.** To ensure the quality and effectiveness of corruption risk attenuation projects, the Customs Service officers should take part in anti-corruption courses and trainings organized with a sense of continual development of human resources.
- **Risk management takes into account human factors.** Effective initiatives to curb corruption need to be founded upon the personnel's motivation and

a guarantee that the workplace is fit enough to provide opportunities for expanding one's internal motivation.

- **Risk management is transparent and inclusive.** Supervisors must be aware that the personnel share the same understanding and sensitivity to corruption risks. Formal and informal practices and criteria for estimating corruption-related threats should be unambiguous, transparent and informative. Good practices seep down from the level of management to the rest of personnel.
- **Risk management is dynamic and responsive to change.** The organizational structure is safeguarded against risk-related disturbances when it remains dynamic and possesses capabilities for self-expansion in response to challenges of the outside world.

Given the complexity and managerial sophistication of the above-delineated postulates, one cannot turn a blind eye to the subjective, human-related facet of risk management. All managerial solutions, even the most elaborate ones, would be as untenable as the squaring of the circle, if their integration with the personnel's subjective perceptions did not succeed. At the end of the day, risk (including corruption risks) stays in the eye of the beholder, and consequently, should be approached having Florian Znaniecki's methodology of the "humanistic coefficient" in one's mind. This is not only a matter of taking care of public understanding of the postulated organizational and systemic improvements. Anti-corruption courses, or elaborate motivational systems are ineffective as long as they are not consistent with personal motivation and the personal, inherently subjective willingness to act.

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Jan Burzyński, Tomasz Burzyński, Andrzej Górny, Wojciech Świątkiewicz

**Ryzyko korupcyjne w perspektywie socjologicznej
Podmiotowe, organizacyjne i kulturowe uwarunkowania
przestępstw urzędowych w sektorze instytucji publicznych**

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Publikacja stanowi socjologiczne spojrzenie na problematykę zagrożenia zachowaniami korupcyjnymi w instytucjach państwowych na przykładzie Służby Celnej RP. Istotą pracy jest przyjęcie możliwie szerokiej, wielopłaszczyznowej perspektywy na problem ryzyka korupcyjnego, w której zawierają się organizacyjne, podmiotowe oraz kulturowe uwarunkowania tego złożonego zjawiska społecznego. Przyjęcie takiej optyki badawczej umożliwia jednocześnie wpisanie niniejszej pracy w te nurty myśli socjologicznej, w których przyjmuje się założenie o konieczności wychodzenia poza sztywne ramy metodologii tradycyjnej, która opiera się na rozgraniczeniu między podmiotowością jednostek a strukturalno-systemowymi wymiarami życia społecznego.

Książka jest adresowana do wszystkich osób, które są zainteresowane socjologią pracy, socjologią przestępczości, czy też ogólnie pojmowaną socjologią empiryczną. Wydanie publikacji w języku angielskim oznacza również, że tezy i obserwacje w niej zawarte mogą okazać się przydatne dla profesjonalistów badających problemy korupcji w ramach struktur Unii Europejskiej.

Jan Burzyński, Tomasz Burzyński, Andrzej Górny, Wojciech Świątkiewicz

**Das Korruptionsrisiko aus soziologischer
Sicht Subjektive u. organisatorische Bedingtheiten
und Kulturbedingtheiten der dienstlichen
Straftaten im Sektor der öffentlichen Institutionen**

Z u s a m m e n f a s s u n g

Die vorliegende Publikation ist eine soziologische Betrachtung der Korruptionsgefahr in staatlichen Institutionen am Beispiel des Zollamtes der Republik Polen. Ihre Verfasser behandeln weitläufig und vielschichtig das Problem des Korruptionsrisikos, indem sie organisatorische, subjektive Bedingtheiten und Kulturbedingtheiten des komplexen gesellschaftlichen Phänomens darstellen. Mit dieser Forschungsmethode passt die vorliegende Publikation in solche soziologischen Strömungen hinein, die voraussetzen, über feste Grenzen der konservativen Methodologie, die die Subjektivität der Menschen von den strukturell-systemhaften Ausmaßen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens trennt, hinauszugehen.

Das Buch richtet sich an alle Personen, die für Soziologie der Arbeit, Soziologie der Kriminalität oder für allgemeine empirische Soziologie Interesse haben. Es wurde auch in englischer Sprache herausgegeben, denn die darin enthaltenen Thesen und Bemerkungen können von den Fachleuten gebraucht werden, die die Korruptionsfälle in den Strukturen der Europäischen Union erforschen.

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